

THE BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF LOVE

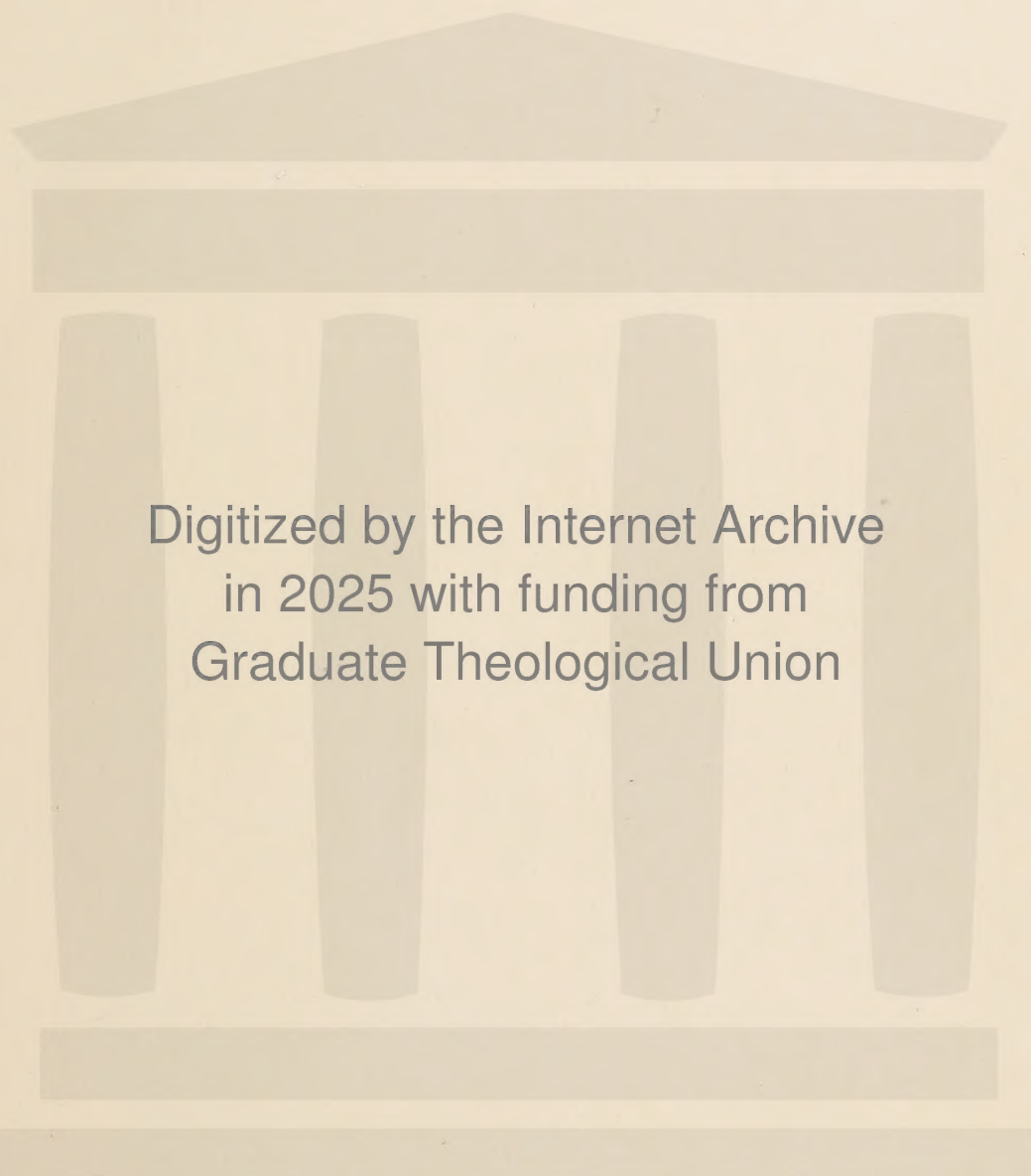
Wilfred Haughton Hodgkin

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the

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THE BIBLICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF LOVE

by

Wilfred Houghton Hodgkin

B. A., The University of California, 1943

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

BACHELOR OF DIVINITY

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL OF THE PACIFIC

Berkeley, California

June 1949

Approved: James H. Baker
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INTRODUCTION

Originally this thesis was to have dealt with the concept of divine love as found in the New Testament - primarily in the writings of St. Paul and St. John. It was to investigate the teachings of these two authors and to compare and contrast their concepts. The investigation into these writings led to the realization that the concept of love as portrayed by these authors was not a new idea with them. It became increasingly evident from the manner in which these writers referred to Christ as the gift of God's love, and as the fulfillment of the Law, that there lay behind their teaching an older tradition. The investigation, therefore, turned to the uncovering of this basic tradition. So the theme of the completed thesis is to show that the roots of the New Testament concept of divine love are deeply planted in the Old Testament soil.

Before arriving at this conclusion, however, we had to investigate the total concept of the idea of love, divine or secular, in both the Old and New Testaments. This investigation has had to go into two fields in each of the Testaments: (1) the investigation of the various words which are translated into English as love or loving-kindness; this investigation is in order to uncover, from the context in which they appear, the various subtle meanings that are assigned to these words, particularly in connection with

the character and attributes of God; and (2) the investigation of the primary analogies, illustrations, and metaphors which are used in connection with these words; this investigation is to uncover the concept of love as it is developed in the pictorial thinking of the various authors and prophets of both the Old and New Testaments.

This does not mean that this writer is of the opinion that there is nothing new in the New Testament. There is much that is a new revelation into the character and personality of God. As our investigation develops we shall see that the New Testament teaching on divine love is vastly different, far greater and superior to that teaching which is to be found in the Old Testament. It has been suggested by the Swedish Theologian Dr. Anders Nygren that the New Testament doctrine of divine love is a complete reversal of the values of antiquity.¹ We think this thesis will show that the New Testament is not a reversal of the Old, but rather a transcending of the Old and a building upon the Old. There is little doubt that the emphasis of the New Testament is greatly different from that of the Old. But that emphasis has its roots firmly planted in the Old Testament.

These, then, are our aims; to show the Old Testament

¹ Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros (London: S.F.C.K., 1939), pp. 44 and 158.

background for the New Testament teaching on divine love, and to contrast the Old Testament roots with the New Testament flower.

While we are doing this, however, there are several questions which we shall have to keep in mind as we proceed with the investigation. It has been postulated by Dr. Nygren that the term agape is a technical term in the New Testament. We must ask, therefore, Do the New Testament authors use this term in the same way throughout their writings, or do they give it different meanings? Do they vary among themselves in the use of this word? Do they use other words to express the same idea of love? If so, what words do they use, and how? Another series of questions that we must keep in mind spring from the suggestion that divine love - agape - is a new concept within the New Testament. Is there a difference between the Old and the New Testaments? And if so, to what extent and in what direction do they vary from each other?

There are in this thesis several points which we have called assumptions, though they are not really assumptions in the strictest sense of the word. Actually they are the conclusions of reputable Biblical scholarship: for example, the datings of the various books of the Bible, the conviction that St. Paul was familiar with the LXX, and so forth. We have assumed, therefore, that these points are

true, because to investigate and prove them so would be outside the scope of this thesis.

It is hoped that this thesis will prove to be of some small value to the Agape School of Theology. These theologians are undertaking a much needed task of presenting to the Church the neglected doctrine of the love of God. The theology which they present reaches great depths of spiritual insight and value, and yet one cannot read such a book as "Agape and Eros" without feeling that Dr. Nygren is attempting or in danger of doing for agape what Dr. Schweitzer has done for Apocalypticism. It is our feeling that he has gone to an extreme by trying to make agape the sum and substance of the New Testament. Our purpose, therefore, in writing this thesis is an attempt (if a presumptuous one) to bring to the theologian as sound a Biblical basis for his theological structure as is within our power. It is for these aims, therefore, that we humbly present this thesis.

PART I

THE OLD TESTAMENT

IDEA OF LOVE

CHAPTER I

PRE-CHRISTIAN AGAPE

Greek Papyri

Our first area of investigation deals with the use of agape in the pre-Christian Greek writings, exclusive of the LXX. We find there are three occurrences in profane Greek papyrus that have been thought to be agape. Two of these, however, are reconstructed by Professor G. A. Deissmann as some word other than agape, and the third is considered doubtful.

The first appears in the Paris Papyri 493 (BC 164-58). Originally Professor Deissmann felt that the restoration in this MS could be agape. He later, however, withdrew his reading in favor of the restoration by Blass of tarachen in place of agapen.¹

The next case is cited by Hatch in the Journal of Biblical Literature, Vol. XXVII, #2, p. 134ff. It is an inscription from the Imperial period from Tefeny in Pisidia and deals with the significance of the throws of the dice, pénpsai d' eis aga(pe)n se philomaidès Aphrodeite. Professor Deissmann calls our attention to the work of F. Heinewetter (1912 Breslaw) in which he proves that the word should be restored eis agathon in place of eis agapen.

¹ G. A. Deissmann, Bible Studies (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1901), p. 198.

The third passage comes from the Herculanum papyri of Philodemus the Epicurean (c 1 BC). This passage is cited in Passow's Wörterbuch der Griechischen Sprache, (1912) and reads di a(g)apes e(nar)gous, followed by the note (Sicher?).

We see, therefore, that there is little to be gained from these three instances in profane Greek. There are, however, several other occurrences of the word in early (pre-Christian and contemporary) MSS.

The first of these is to be found in a letter to Aristeas (ii/i BC) which uses agape in the religious sense. In doing this it stands with Wisdom as the earliest to adopt the word into a new or special use.

The second appears in Philo's Quod Deus immut, #14 (M, p 283) par ho moi ekei tois proairemenois dusi kephalaiois, to te hos anthropos kai to suggene, phobon te kai agapen. Deissmann says this of it, "Here then we have agape and in such manner as to repel the supposition that Philo adopted the word from the LXX. Further, agape is here used already in its religious-ethical sense, for the connection shows that the reference is to love to God, the antithesis of which is fear of God e pros to agapan e pros to phobeisthai ton onta."² See I John 4:18.³

² Deissmann, op. cit., p. 199.

³ I Jn 4:18 - "There is no fear in love; but perfect

Our third passage is found in a scholion to Thuc. 11. 51,5, which reads philanthropias kai agapas. Deissmann points out that this may be a gloss for aretas, but he adds that our opinion of this gloss depends on whether or not the glossator was a Christian.⁴

One of the most important uses of agape in extra-Biblical writings is found in the great prayer to Isis in the Oxyrhynchus Papyrus XI No. 1380 (early 2nd Century AD). There are four lines of the papyrus that are important to us: 1.28 tells us that the people of Thonis (north Egypt) called Isis agape "Love"; in Italy Isis was called agape thewn "Love of the gods" (1.109); in Dora, near Caesarea in Palestine, she was called philia (1.94); and, according to 1.63, Isis was called aletheia "Truth" at Menuthis in north Egypt. The use of agape and aletheia in relation to Isis remind one of the parallel use of these words in I John, 4:8,16 (God is love) and John 14:6 (I am the way and the truth -- I am in the Father, etc.). This parallel is of great interest since it shows the pagan use of agape in relation to the gods of the mystery cults.

3 continued from page 3.

love casteth out fear, because fear hath punishment; and he that feareth is not made perfect in love."

⁴ Deissmann, op. cit., p. 200.

The Septuagint

Our next group of early uses of agape is to be found in the LXX, supposedly translated under Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-246 BC). It is highly probable that Paul and other New Testament authors were familiar with the LXX. Its primary importance for us, however, is the frequency with which it uses agape and agapao.

The most profane use of agape in the LXX is in the Song of Songs (eleven times) where it is used in connection with sensual, romantic love of the commonest sort.

"As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love. (S-G, 'and look upon me with love.') Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love and his right hand doth embrace me. I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes, and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, till it please (S-G, 'that you rouse not, nor awaken love, until it please')." ⁵

Canticles 3:5 is simply a repetition of 2:7, "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem"

There is an interesting gloss in Cant. 3:10, 'being paved with love, for the daughters of Jerusalem.' This should read 'its interior inlaid with ebony' (S-G), or 'inlaid or plated with ebony.' ⁶ In 5:8 agape is used in

⁵ S-G, our symbol for the Smith-Goodspeed version of the Bible.

⁶ The Abingdon Bible Commentary (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1929), p. 625.

a message to the bride's beloved, "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love - (S-G, 'I am sick with love.')

Love here is the activity of love. In 7:6, however, agape is used as a substitute for the bride's name, "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights"; S-G renders this as "How lovely you are, beloved one, joyous maiden!" This latter is probably a better translation.

The last passage in the Song of Songs reads:

"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up, nor awake my love, until he please (S-G, 'you rouse not, nor waken love, until it please.')

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved? I raised thee up under the apple tree: there thy mother brought thee forth; there she brought thee forth that bare thee. Set me a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals therefore are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of a house for love, it would be utterly condemned." S of S 8:4, 7 & 7.

Throughout the Song of Songs we see agape used in this sensual, sexual manner. There is clearly nothing theological in its use here. But we do see in the description in 8:7 a use which seems to go beyond the purely sensual. Canticles is amatory poetry at its best. Love here is associated with life and death; there is nothing that can overcome it, neither floods nor rivers nor anything. It is like a flame that does not go out.

We may say, therefore, that these ten uses leave us with agape as sensual love and that while it is often a vulgar usage, it ends with an emphasis on the endurance of love. This last emphasis is of importance for our later study. For, if the New Testament writers were familiar with the LXX, then this enduring quality of agape might play an important part in their adopting the word to a special use.

Three instances of the word in the LXX are in passages older than the Song of Songs, viz. II Kings (II Sam in the Hebrew OT) 1:26, 13:15, and Jer. 2:2. The latter reads:

"Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord; I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals (S-G, your bridal love), when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Israel was holiness unto the Lord, and the firstfruits of his increase: all that devour him shall offend; evil shall come upon them saith the Lord." Jer 2:1-3.

Agape is here used in relation to the covenant between Yahweh and Israel, in an analogy of bridal love. Israel, as the first fruits, had been set apart as something sacred, but she had now fallen away from this early love and bond between herself and her God. We dare not over emphasize any special meaning at this point other than the fact that agape was used to describe the relation between Yahweh and Israel. The former of these early uses, as found in II

Samuel, deals purely with brotherly love: 1:26 deals with David's lament over the death of Jonathan, "Thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women"; and 13:15 deals with love of man for woman, "Then Amnon hated her exceedingly; so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her." Neither of these gives us more than the commonplace meaning of love.

The most important group of LXX uses of agape is found in the Wisdom literature of Ecclesiastes, the Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus. Ecclesiastes 9:1 leads us to think of agape in relation to God's feeling for man. "For all this I laid to my heart (the preacher has been speaking of wisdom), even to explore all this: that the righteous, and the wise, and their works, are in the hand of God; whether it be for love or hatred, man knoweth it not; all is before him." In other words, God's feeling toward man may be either love or hatred and we don't know which. In verse 6 of the same chapter agape is used in a perfectly commonplace manner: The memory of man is forgotten, "as well their love, as their hatred and envy, is perished long ago." In Ecclesiasticus 48:11 agape seems to be used in connection with a state of being - (death), "Blessed are they that saw thee, and they that have been beautified with love (S-G, 'those who fell asleep in love'); for we also shall surely live." We may well ask the question, "Who

fell asleep in love; in love of what?" It would seem from the preceding context that "love" refers to a state of concord with one's fellow man, since Elijah was the one who performed all the great feats of reconciling men to men and men to God: see 48:1-11.⁷

Our last two uses of agape in the LXX come from Wisdom of Solomon 3:9 and 6:18. The first of these seems to have a definite theological connection; Those who have been chastened by God shall receive great good, they shall have judgment over the nations and God shall reign over them. "They that trust on him shall understand truth, and the faithful shall abide with him in love; because grace and mercy are to his chosen." (S-G, 'will cling to him in love.') Wi 3:5-8. Love here seems to be man's relation to God as the result of God's cleansing and chastening. In

⁷ "Also there arose Elijah the Prophet as fire, and his word burned like a torch: who brought a famine upon them, and by his zeal made them few in number. By the word of the Lord he shut up the heaven: thrice did he thus bring down fire. How wast thou glorified, O Elijah, in thy wondrous deeds! and who shall glory like unto thee? Who did raise up a dead man from the death, and from the place of the dead by the most high: who brought down kings to destruction, and honourable men from their bed: who heard rebuke at Sinai, and judgments of vengeance in Horeb: who anointed kings for retribution, and prophets to succeed after him: who was taken up in a tempest of fire, in a chariot of fiery horses: who was recorded for reproofs in their seasons, to pacify anger, before it brake forth into wrath; to turn the heart of the father unto the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob. Blessed are they that saw thee, and they that have beautified with love; for we also shall surely live."

6:18 agape is used in connection with Wisdom. "For her (Wisdom) true beginning is desire of discipline; and the care for discipline is love of her; And love of her is observance of her laws; and to give heed to her laws confirmeth incorruption; and incorruption bringeth near unto God." Wi 6:17-18. Love of wisdom is here made a requisite or step for approaching God. We cannot carry this too far, for love here is love of the laws of Wisdom rather than love of Wisdom herself. This however, is a step to love of God, for Wisdom may be God.

We see, therefore, that there are only three significant implications of the word agape to be found in the LXX: (1) the enduring quality of love - Song of Songs; (2) to describe the covenant between Yahweh and His people Israel - Jeremiah; and (3) as a step or point in the logical method of approaching Yahweh, - Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus. Outside of these, which should not be over emphasized, agape is used only as the common word for love: and, as in the Song of Songs, in a rather sensual manner. It is interesting to note that in the LXX agape is used for the translation of only one word, ahabah, and in only the few instances shown above. Agapao, however, is used several hundred times to translate some 19 Hebrew words (its uses fill more than a page in a large concordance). It would seem, therefore, that agapao was used by

the LXX translators as a general word for love, with no special meaning.⁸ This is given more weight when we realize that eros is not used at all in the LXX. As for the other Greek words for love: storge and philia, we find that storge is used only four times in the Greek Apocrypha: phileio is used to translate three Hebrew words in some thirty-five instances (philia also for three words in a handful of cases).⁹ It is clear, then, that agapaw is the general verb for love in the LXX.

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|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 8. i. אָהַב | ii. כּוֹא | iii. יָנַח | iv. קָטַף | v. קָצַף |
| vi. יָדְדוּהָ | vii. יָדָה | viii. יָדָה | ix. יִשְׁדְּדוּ | x. כָּשַׁדְשָׁה |
| xi. סָדַח | xii. אֶשְׁחָה | xiii. כִּיחָח | xiv. קָנַח | xv. קָחַם |
| xvi. דָּחַץ | xvii. שָׁחַד | xviii. שָׁחַץ | xix. שָׁחַץ עֵינָיו | |
-
- | | | | |
|------------|----------|------------------|---------------------|
| 9. phileio | i. אָהַב | ii. כָּשַׁדְשָׁה | iii. דָּחַץ |
| philia | i. אָהַב | ii. אֶחָבָה | iii. דָּחַץ, דָּוָר |

Conclusions

Our first area of investigation has led us to several rather important discoveries. We have seen that agape was used only a few times in pre-Christian writings and that most of these were in the LXX. There were three papyri in which it was thought the word agape appeared, modern scholars, however, now reconstruct these occurrences with some word other than agape. Two of the most important extra-Biblical appearances of agape are to be found (1) in Philo, in which he uses it in the religious sense by contrasting love of God with fear of God, and (2) in the prayer to Isis, in which the god is called "love." The most important use of agape was found in the Greek Old Testament in which we saw the verb agapao used as the general term for love. Agape, while not used often, was given three significant connotations. The most important of these was as a description of the covenant relation between Yahweh and Israel. The other two connotations made agape a step in the process of knowing God and assigned to agape a lasting quality. It would seem, therefore, that the Alexandrian Jews were among the first to use agape in a religious-ethical sense and thereby paved the way for the New Testament writers' annexation of the term. Our last important discovery was the fact that eros, the Platonic word for love, was not to be found in the LXX.

CHAPTER II

THE FORERUNNER OF AGAPE

In the previous chapter we dealt with the use of one word, agape, in pre-Christian writings. One of our discoveries was that in LXX agape had only a limited use as a special term and that the verb, agapao, was a general term for love of any kind. The theme of this chapter will be to determine the essence and development of the idea of Divine Love as found in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew Old Testament uses several words to express the idea of love. Aheb, ahabah are usually translated as 'love' and as we saw were translated into agape, agapao in the LXX. The Hebrew word, chesed, is hardly translatable into English but is usually rendered as 'goodness,' 'loving-kindness,' 'kindness,' 'favor,' 'loyal love,' and 'mercy.' While chesed is not rendered as 'love' in English it is used in the majority of cases, in connection with the affectionate side of Yahweh's character. It is, therefore, of great importance to our investigation. Yet more important than any single word are the figures or analogies that are used in the Old Testament to describe the idea of divine love. One of the basic expressions is the 'covenant' or bond between Yahweh and his people Israel. An important analogy is the idea of Yahweh as the husband of Israel (see Jer 2:2 where agape is used in this

sense). And another analogy is that of Yahweh as a father. Our discussion in the next two chapters will, therefore, follow through these four lines of thought: chesed or 'loving-kindness,' the covenant relation, Yahweh as husband, and Yahweh as father. Our aim in this chapter will be to show the relation between chesed and Divine Love.

As we pointed out above, chesed is rendered as 'loyal love,' 'loving-kindness,' 'mercy,' and so forth. There is always carried in it the idea of a definite relationship and therefore of the sense of duty. Dr. W. O. E. Oesterly says, "Even so, it is not merely an attitude adopted by one person to another, but that essential quality of the soul from which love, sympathy, pity, devotion, all spring. It may produce an attitude of the inferior to the superior, of man to God. It may imply the attitude of the superior to the inferior, of God to man. Or, again, it may be the attitude of equals to one another, of man to man. In any case it implies a full appreciation of and a complete devotion to, a personality."¹

It seems to be the general opinion of Bade, Knudson, and Oesterly and Robinson that the Prophet Hosea marks the turning point in the development of the concept of 'divine

¹ Oesterly & Robinson, Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development (London: S.P.C.K., 1947), p. 238.

love.'² We will, therefore, consider chesed before Hosea and after Hosea.

Pre-Hosean Chesed

There are only a few occurrences of chesed in the pre-Hosean writings. The majority of these use the term as a man-to-man relationship that has little or no theological implication: e.g., in Genesis 20:13 Abraham says, "This is thy kindness (chesed) which thou shalt show unto me: at every place whither we shall come say of me, He is my brother." Abraham has asked Sarah to pose as his sister rather than as his wife during their journeys. Other passages in which chesed is used as a man-to-man relationship are: Gen 21:23, 40:14, 47:29, Joshua 2:12 & 14, and Judges 8:35. The use varies somewhat in these passages, but generally its use is along the lines of kindly dealings with another person.

Twice in the J document, Gen 24:27 and 32:10, chesed is used as the God-man relationship. Both are in prayers in which the worshipper attributes to Yahweh great loving-

² Wm. F. Bade, The Old Testament in the Light of Today (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930), pp. 153-158.

A. C. Knudson, The Religious Teaching of the Old Testament (New York: Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 180.

Oesterly & Robinson, op. cit., p. 238.

kindness. The first, Gen 24:27, is the prayer of thanksgiving offered by Abraham's servant, "Blessed by Yahweh, the God of my master Abraham, who hath not forsaken his loving-kindness and truth toward my master." The loving-kindness which has been shown is the gift of a wife for Isaac. We may also note that chesed is here used in context with truth, a fact which we will bring out more fully later on. The second passage, 32:10, is again a prayer of thanksgiving. Jacob is lamenting to Yahweh that he is not worthy of all the chesed which Yahweh has shown him. The chesed is again exhibited in terms of material kindness and again we find "truth" coupled with chesed.

Two pre-Hosean uses which more fully merit our attention are found in Exodus 20:6 & 34:6. The first of these is in the first giving of the Law and is used as an attribute of Yahweh, " . . . for I Yahweh thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing loving-kindness (chesed) unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments." The second occurs in the second giving of the two tables of stone by Yahweh and is simply a restatement of the first. Moses is to go up into Mt. Sinai and there Yahweh will write upon the stones. He does so and Yahweh proclaims, "Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and

abundant in loving-kindness (chesed) and truth; keeping loving-kindness for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin; and that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations." (Ex 34:6-7.) These passage are, according to Dr. S. R. Driver, from the JE document.³

They are, therefore, before the time of Hosea. We see in them several rather interesting points. First of all, chesed seems to be an attribute of Yahweh. His chesed is for thousands. Moreover, we see that chesed is combined with Yahweh's powers of forgiveness. In fact we will see later that Yahweh's chesed, his loving-kindness or loyal love, is always coupled with his forgiveness - the two go hand in hand. The one seems to be the result of the other: Yahweh's chesed leads to his forgiving Israel's transgressions. As a matter of fact, Yahweh's chesed is being shown forth in his giving a second time of the stone tablets; he is forgiving his people and renewing his covenant with them. But we also see a third element which is the antithesis of this affectionate side of Yahweh's character, and that is the wrath of Yahweh which will be visited upon the guilty. His wrath is so great that it is passed on even

³ S. R. Driver, An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament (New York: Chas. Scribners' Sons, 1897), p. 32.

to the offspring of the guilty. We may say, therefore, that there is a high insight into God's character present in a very early strata of the Old Testament. It is, to be sure, not fully developed nor is it the main theme of these early writings. This insight is an early revelation through which the name of Yahweh takes on a new and richer meaning.

We may now ask the question, "Why should Yahweh have this chesed for his people? What have they done to deserve God's love?" Dr. Knudson, in his "Religious Teaching of the Old Testament," gives us a clue to the answer. Man has done nothing to deserve God's love, but God is the Creator and creatorship leads to a feeling of 'interest and sympathy' for that which we create.⁴ In short, we love that which we create. The author of II Esdras gives us a thought along this line, "For thou comest far short that thou shouldest be able to love my creature more than I." (II Esdras 8:47.)⁵ It seems to me that this is a good reason

⁴ Knudson, op. cit., p. 187.

⁵ Also Deut 4:32-37, "For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from one end of heaven unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it? Did ever a people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God as-sayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by an outstretched arm, and by great terrors, according to all that Jehovah your God did for you

for God's love. It may not be the whole answer but as we carry it out to its logical conclusion we see that it gives us a foundation upon which we may build a theology that goes far beyond the Old Testament teaching on the meaning of God's love. God is the creator of all men, therefore he loves all men, and will save all men who respond to his love. But we are getting ahead of our thesis; so let us take up the next set of Old Testament passages.

Another JE passage of some importance is Numbers 14:18-19. This reflects Exodus 34:6 both in regard to chesed as a quality or attribute of Yahweh, and in its being linked to Yahweh's forgiveness. For Yahweh will forgive according to his chesed.

In First Isaiah (Chs 1-39) we find a passage on the man-to-man relationship. One that is on a fairly high level (16:5), "And a throne shall be established in loving-kindness; and one shall sit thereon in truth, in the tent of David, judging, and seeking justice, and swift to do righteousness."

5 continued from page 18.

in Egypt before your eyes? Unto thee it was showed, that thou mightest know that Jehovah he is God; there is none else besides him. --- And because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them, and brought thee out with his presence, with his great power, out of Egypt;"

We turn now to those passages in I and II Samuel and I Kings, in which we find the author using chesed. It is a little hard to place these texts as pre-Hosean since the books themselves probably were not written until the sixth century BC, well after the time of Hosea. The material, however, covers the early period and is drawn from older texts and works. The early redactors were of the "scissors and paste" type. They worked with documents of the "Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and Judah" and other manuscripts mentioned in their writings. They did not rewrite the old documents, as would a modern editor, but simply used whole passages from their sources. They would not tend to change words or introduce new words and phrasing of their own.

Here again we find the predominant use of chesed as a man-to-man relationship with little or no theological meaning. In the higher meaning (that is, religious or ethical), however, we find chesed used as a man-to-man relationship with an ethical element brought in. It is a relation of kindness or love between men. The basis for this love is Yahweh's love for man. This is brought out in II Samuel 20:14 and 15: "And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the loving-kindness of Yahweh, that I die not; but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever." In other words, the relation is between

David and Jonathan but it is on the basis of Yahweh's chesed for man. David is to show Jonathan the chesed of Yahweh. We see a similar idea in II Samuel 2:5 and 6, "And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said unto them, 'Blessed be ye of Yahweh, that ye have showed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul and have buried him, and now Yahweh show loving-kindness and truth unto you.'" The men of Jabesh-gilead have performed an act of chesed for their fellowman and so David calls forth the chesed of Yahweh on them. Whether these men acted out of Yahweh's chesed or not we are not told, but it appears that their act has brought forth the chesed of Yahweh by way of David's blessing. The best example of this Yahweh-motivated chesed is found in II Samuel 9:3, David says, "Is there not yet any of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of Yahweh unto him?" David is ready to perform an act of chesed to another man, this act of chesed to be like the chesed of Yahweh or, we might say, based on the chesed of Yahweh.

In all three of these passages we find the common thread of man's act in some relation to God's act. Yahweh's chesed calls forth the act of chesed between men, or man's act of chesed is based upon or likened to Yahweh's chesed. It may be that this ethical connotation has been read into these early times by the redactor of Samuel and Kings. We

are inclined, however, to think not, for in all four books of Samuel and Kings there are only these three instances of this ethical relationship. In other words, these contexts are the uncommon thing at this time, just as the passage in Exodus was unique for its time. It would seem logical that if the redactor was going to read a later doctrine of chesed into his work we would do so more often. We may say, therefore, that we have in the pre-Hosean writings a minor development in the meaning of chesed. That is, chesed with an ethical implication. It is not much, but it is one step in a long development.

There is one further passage of a somewhat different nature found in I Kings 3:6 in which Solomon refers to Yahweh's great loving-kindness to his father David. This would seem to imply a God to man relationship. But the interesting implication of this passage is the condition upon which this chesed was shown, "according as he (David) walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in the uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great loving-kindness." Yahweh's blessing to David was the result of, or was conditioned by, David's obeying Yahweh and walking before him in righteousness and truth.

Hosea

We come now to the time of Hosea who prophesied

from about 740 to 722 B.C. It is generally felt that Hosea's personal life and marital troubles had a definite effect on his prophetic teachings. There is, however, no agreement on the relation of the account in ch 1 with the account in ch 3. In regard to this Dr. T. W. Manson says, "It is generally agreed today that these chapters are not to be merely allegorically explained, but that Gomer was a real person who was unfaithful to her husband, and that it was from the bitter experience of his own home that Hosea was led to the deepest element in his own teaching of Divine love."⁶ From this personal experience Hosea draws the analogy of Yahweh and Israel as husband and wife, with the wife playing the harlot. Yahweh is seen to yearn over the waywardness of his spouse. Hosea's emphasis is on the chesed of Yahweh rather than the fear of Yahweh. The best way to make clear the teaching of Hosea is to follow the comparison between Amos and Hosea as made by Dr. Bade:⁷

Amos	Hosea
Yahweh, a righteous Judge.	Yahweh, a loving but outraged and angry husband.
I hate, I despise your sacrificial feasts. . . .	I desire love (<u>chesed</u>) and not sacrifice, the knowledge of

⁶ T. W. Manson, A Companion to the Bible (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 56.

⁷ Bade, op. cit., p. 155.

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness as an everflowing stream. God and not burnt offerings.

Seek good and not evil, that ye may live . . . and establish justice in the gate. Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of love; break up your fallow ground of knowledge that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

We see from these selections how Hosea appealed to the inward rather than the external conduct. Moreover, Hosea gives a teaching that has a more winning appeal than the fear in Amos's prophecy ("I desire love" rather than "I hate"). Amos demands that men should behave themselves, but Hosea holds that that is not enough. Men's actions must come from deep within him and spring out in upright and loving conduct. Yahweh is a loving husband who desires not sacrificial feasts nor individual seeking after good, but chesed, knowledge of Yahweh, and righteousness. Yahweh has loved Israel and expects her love in return. But, says Hosea, Yahweh is also an angered husband and can inflict upon Israel a great penalty: 'He will remember their iniquity, he will punish their sins.' (Hos 9:9.) Yahweh will visit Israel's sins and deal harshly with her for them, but Yahweh is a loving God and will forgive her if she will return to him. "Come let us return unto Yahweh; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days will he revive us: and on

the third day he will raise us up and we shall live before him." (Hos 6:1-2.) In this picturesque way we see how Hosea links Yahweh's chesed and forgiveness together; the two, as we said before, going hand in hand: the chesed being basic and the forgiveness coming out of it.

So far we have considered Hosea's teaching about Divine Love in only general terms. We turn now, therefore, to his use of chesed. While Hosea uses the word only six times, these uses are important. We do not find the purely man-to-man relationship which was the predominant use in the pre-Hosean writings. In 2:19 Hosea used chesed for a relationship between God and man, "And I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know Yahweh." (Hos 2:19-20.) Yahweh here promises Israel certain gifts, of which chesed is one, which she will receive when 'betrothed' to Yahweh. Chesed is a gift which goes from Yahweh to Israel, but it is more than just a gift. It seems to be an attitude or state of mind. Hosea develops this idea of chesed as an attitude in three other passages: in 4:1 we find that "Yahweh hath a controversy with the inhabitants (Israel) of the land, because there is no truth, nor chesed nor knowledge of God in the land." Again, in 10:12, we find that Israel has

been sowing wickedness and reaping lies. Hosea calls on the people to "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to chesed; break up your fallow ground; for it is time to seek Yahweh, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." And in 12:6, the prophet calls the people to "turn thou to thy God: keep chesed and justice, and wait for thy God continually." We see from these passages that Hosea has introduced a new element or teaching into the idea of chesed, one that was not in the pre-Hosean writings. This element is the idea of chesed as an intangible. In the pre-Hosean writings we saw that Yahweh's chesed was in material benefits. Yahweh had been kind to Abraham, he has dealt kindly with David. Hosea, however, does not use this material concept; there is no chesed in the land; you have reaped lies; you should reap chesed, and keep chesed and justice. These are attitudes, they are given in pictorial language but they border on the abstract concept of love per se. Hosea has turned chesed from the material gifts to the inner attitude from which springs man's deepest motives.

Hosea uses the term on two other occasions. Both of these deal with chesed as a man to God relationship, but both are more than just the relation, they are definitive of the relation. In 6:4 we find that man's chesed is temporary and not long-lasting, "for your chesed is as

a morning cloud, and as the dew that goeth early away." The more important passage is 6:6, in which we find that Yahweh's demand is not sacrifice, but loyal love, "for I desire chesed and not sacrifice."

We may deduce from Hosea's use of the term chesed that Yahweh's will for man is that man have the basic attitude of chesed. Furthermore, this attitude is an unstable thing in man. Man cannot retain chesed at all times and often he falls short of Yahweh's wish. But Yahweh's chesed is constant, he may judge man harshly, but if man will return to him he will forgive man and take him again as his 'wife.'

Post-Hosean Chesed

We come now to the post-Hosean period of prophets and teachers. At the outset we find two rather interesting developments in the use of the term chesed. First we find that chesed is used considerably more often than it was during the pre-Hosean period, and secondly we find that the primary use of the term is on the God to man side of its meaning. Only in I and II Chronicles (I Ch 19:2, II Ch 24:22, 32:32, 35:26) and Ruth (3:10) and Esther (2:9) do we find chesed used in the common man-to-man relationship (those parts of Chronicles where chesed is used are definitely post-Hosean, both in writing and content). There are

two other uses of chesed in Ruth (Ru 1:8 and 2:20); one which reflects the idea found in Genesis 24:12-14, in which a blessing is given, "Yahweh deal chesed with you, as ye have dealt with me," and the other which emphasizes the enduringness of Yahweh's chesed. It is even given to the living and the dead. Both of these uses are simply repetitions of ideas already in use.

In Nehemiah, Joel, Jonah, and Deuteronomy (5:10) we find a rather interesting repetition of the idea of Exodus 34:6 in which chesed is used as an attribute of Yahweh, "Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness (chesed)." We will do well to remember that this passage was originally in the earliest stratum of the Old Testament and that to find it re-echoed eight times in the Old Testament is somewhat indicative of its importance.

It is rather difficult to assess the use of chesed in the Book of Proverbs. The passages are so short that one does not have a context upon which to fall back. In some cases (19:22, 20:6, and 31:26) chesed seems to be a quality or virtue for man to desire. In other cases it seems to be the means of atoning for iniquity (16:6, by mercy [chesed] and truth iniquity is atoned for). In still other cases chesed seems to be the means of finding a fuller life. (20:28.) 'Chesed and truth preserve the king;

and his throne is upholden by chesed; and (21:21) 'He that followeth after righteousness and chesed, findeth life righteousness and honor.' It is interesting to see in this last passage that chesed is again coupled with truth and righteousness.

Several other passages in which chesed is used are worthy of note. Micah three times uses chesed for God's relation to man. Once it is used as Yahweh's desire that man should live in chesed, and twice as Yahweh's chesed for man, with the addition that Yahweh is not only a God of chesed but one that delighteth in chesed (7:18). Zech-ariah re-echoes the idea of chesed as God's law for man (7:9). I have already pointed to one use of chesed in Deuteronomy (5:10) which was a reflection of the idea in Exodus 34:6 where chesed is an attribute of Yahweh. This attribute is repeated in Deut 7:9, "Know therefore that Yahweh thy God, he is God, the faithful God, who keepeth covenant and loving-kindness (chesed) with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." (Deut 7:12 is simply a reference that Yahweh will keep his covenant and chesed which he promised.) We notice in this passage that chesed is coupled with the covenant idea and that there is a condition imposed on those who would follow Yahweh: they are to keep his covenant and commandments. If they keep them Yahweh will shower his chesed upon them.

Second and Third Isaiah (Is 40-55 and 56-66) use chesed entirely in terms of the chesed of Yahweh. In Isaiah 40:6 we find chesed based in the power of Yahweh, "All flesh is grass, and the goodliness (chesed) thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the breath of Yahweh bloweth upon it." In other words, chesed is subject to the 'breath' of Yahweh just as are the flowers and grasses. In 54:8 and 10 we find Isaiah emphasizing the everlasting quality of chesed, "In overflowing wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting loving-kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith Yahweh thy Redeemer" and "For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed; but my loving-kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed." In the first of these we see the reflection of the teaching of Hosea. In Isaiah 54:4-7 the unknown prophet has likened Israel to a wife who has forsaken her husband but is now gathered (or will be gathered) to her husband again. Once Israel is gathered again unto Yahweh He will never again remove his chesed from her. It would seem from the context of this passage that for a while Israel was left without the chesed of Yahweh. (This is of interest when we compare the above with the ideas Agape-theologians who maintain that man is never without the 'love' of God.) In the latter passage

we are reminded of the idea in Song of Songs 8:7 (see ch I) where storms and floods cannot overcome the 'love' of the lovers. Isaiah carries the idea a step forward by applying lasting quality to the chesed of Yahweh; it is more likely that the mountains will fall apart than will the chesed of God.

Second Isaiah emphasizes the idea of chesed as a gift (55:3) which is related to the covenant. Yahweh will make a covenant with Israel even as he made one with David and promised David his chesed, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even as the sure mercies of David." It is well to note here the qualification for receiving the chesed of Yahweh: all Israel has to do is to listen and draw near to Him. Third Isaiah carries on the idea of chesed as a gift in 63:7, "I will make mention of the loving-kindness (chesed) of Yahweh, and the praises of Yahweh, according to all that Yahweh hath bestowed on us, and the great goodness (chesed) toward the house of Israel, which he hath bestowed on them according to his mercies and according to the multitude of his loving-kindnesses." The prophet is here recalling the liberal chesed which Yahweh has given Israel in past times; it was always a gift from Yahweh to Israel. As the prophet goes on to recall these gifts he seems to refer (63:10ff) to the material gifts of

Yahweh's bringing Israel out of the bondage of Egypt, and not to the inner or spiritual-ethical gift of chesed as found in Hosea.

Jeremiah, like Isaiah, uses chesed in the deeper sense of the 'Divine love.' In 2:2, Yahweh recalls the chesed that man (Israel) once had for him. Chesed is here the man-God relationship. In 16:5 and 31:3 we find warnings that chesed may be taken away from the people because of their unfaithfulness and the promise that Yahweh will gather again his people and love them with an everlasting love. It is the same idea we find in Hosea, of Yahweh returning to his wife Israel.

There are three passages in Jeremiah (9:24, 32:18, and 33:11) that we will discuss together as they define the character of Yahweh. "Thus saith Yahweh, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding, and knoweth me, that I am Yahweh who exerciseth loving-kindness, justice, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith Yahweh." (9:23-24.) Jeremiah is here telling us that chesed is an active quality or attribute of Yahweh. It is again coupled with righteousness and justice. The appeal is to the inner, ethical-spiritual conduct of man. Moreover, chesed is something in

which Yahweh takes great delight. In 32:18 chesed is further defined as a quality or gift which is given to thousands. Jeremiah probably means by this that chesed is unlimited. He was writing at the time of the Deuteronomic reform and Yahweh was still only the God of the Hebrews; they had not yet reached a full monotheistic concept. Jeremiah probably means, therefore, that Yahweh's chesed is for thousands but is limited to the Israelites. In 33:11 Jeremiah further attributes to chesed the quality of everlastingness, - an idea that is not new with him but is simply a re-emphasis on its enduring quality.

Chesed in the Psalms

Our next group of passages is found in the Book of Psalms. It is rather difficult to deal with these in any logical order as it is nearly impossible to date them with any accuracy. They are important, however, for the term chesed appears in nearly half of the hundred and fifty Psalms, and the religious music of a people is often the best key to their theological thinking.

Our investigation of the Psalms reveals to us the fact that the Psalms sum up our investigation so far. We find chesed used in all the various ways that we have already discovered in other Old Testament books. In Psalm 109:12 and 16 chesed is used as a man-to-man relation,

'Let there be none to extend kindness (chesed) unto him. . . . Because he remembered not to show kindness (chesed)," this comes by way of a condemnation of the psalmist's enemy, "Let no man show chesed to my enemy." It is interesting to note that this passage of vengeance is the only occurrence of a man-to-man relationship in the Psalms. Once in the 36th Psalm (v3) we find a man to God relationship but in this case it is a negative quality, for the wicked have no fear of Yahweh, therefore they have ceased to do good (chesed). In other words, the atheist is lacking in this quality of chesed to man or to Yahweh.

All the rest of 127 occurrences of chesed deal with the God to man relationship, or with chesed as an attribute of Yahweh, or as an explanation of Yahweh's chesed, or as what would seem to be an abstract - that is, the essence of chesed. This last is rather interesting since we are often told that the Hebrew mind of that day did not think in abstract terms. And yet, in some of these Psalms, we find the psalmist singing about chesed in abstract terms. For example, in the 23rd Psalm we find the psalmist has been listing all the good things that Yahweh has done for him and then he closes with this seemingly abstract idea that goodness and loving-kindness shall follow him always, "Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life." In the 32nd Psalm we find a similar idea,

"But he that trusteth in Yahweh, loving-kindness shall compass him about." Smith-Goodspeed renders this, "But him who trusts in the Lord he surrounds with kindness." The implication is, of course, the relation from God to man. It is Yahweh's chesed which surrounds man but the passage seems to be phrased in such a manner that chesed stands by itself. The passage in 36:6 may give a better explanation of the point which I am trying to make, "Thy loving-kindness, O Yahweh, is in the heavens; Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the skies. Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God." Chesed here is the chesed of Yahweh. A relationship is implied but it is not a direct relationship to any individual or group. It is more a relationship to the mountains and skies. It is not a true abstract in the sense of a Platonic ideal form, but it seems to border on the abstract. The best illustration of this point is found in 85:10 where, "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Mercy, truth, righteousness, and peace all seem to be without any reference to Yahweh or to man. We still have the pictorial language of the Hebrew where each of these 'abstracts' is personalized and animated. We may remind ourselves of the Wisdom literature in which the idea of Wisdom is personalized in a similar manner. Again, in 101:1, we find the psalmist singing of loving-kindness and justice. Psalm 62:12 tells

us that loving-kindness belongs to Yahweh and almost seems to be Yahweh's property. We cannot carry the idea of an abstract too far because Yahweh is always in the background. It would seem, therefore, that chesed becomes almost hypostatized rather than an abstract.

Psalms 25:10, 52:1, 57:10, 59:16, 69:13, 89:1 & 2 100:5, and 138:8 all refer to chesed as an attribute of Yahweh. These passages describe his chesed as lasting and abundant. Three passages (103:8, 86:15, & 145:8) make direct reference to Exodus 34:6 where Yahweh describes himself as a God slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness.

A third point of which we shall take note is the frequency with which chesed is linked with truth, righteousness, and justice. The psalmist reflects here the emphasis of Hosea and the other prophets who also linked these concepts together in their preaching.

A fourth reflection of the psalmist is the reference to the 'saving power' of Yahweh's chesed. In 6:4, "Return, O Yahweh, deliver my soul: Save me for thy loving-kindness sake"; 17:7, "Show thy marvellous loving-kindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them that take refuge in thee"; 31:16, "Save me in thy loving-kindness." Ps. 44:26, 61:7, 94:16, and 109:26 all reflect this same idea of Yahweh saving man for his loving-kindness sake. This again simply serves to amplify the same idea as found in the

prophetic writings.

We may say, therefore, that the Psalms show the important place which Yahweh's chesed had in the Hebrew mind. It was one of the predominant refrains in his active worship. This is amply illustrated by the 136th Psalm in which the psalmist sings again and again (26 times) to the loving-kindness of Yahweh which endureth forever.

Conclusions

We find from this investigation of chesed that the term gradually loses the common meaning and becomes associated with the character of Yahweh, especially in the worshipping expressions of the Hebrews. We also find that chesed is associated with truth, righteousness, and justice. Moreover, it is a means whereby man is to be saved; he will be saved for loving-kindness' sake, out of the chesed of Yahweh. And lastly, we see that chesed is the appeal to the inner, ethical conduct and attitude of man; Yahweh desires not sacrifices but chesed. It is a gift from Yahweh and characteristic of Him. It always characterizes a relationship between God and man even though it at times almost becomes hypostatized. Even then Yahweh is in the background. Chesed is given to thousands, it is greater than the mountains, but it is only given to those who are under the covenant relation with Yahweh. It does

not seem to be given to those outside the Hebrew covenant. In the Old Testament this would be the one great limitation to the idea of 'Divine Love.' It remains for a later revelation to make of this a full, universal love.

We have seen that the term chesed carries with it certain qualities or implications. Chesed is lasting and enduring, it is abundant and Yahweh is full of it, and it is a gift and is given to thousands. Chesed is used to characterize the relation between God and man; it is either from God to man, from man to God, or from man to man. Most important, however, is the discovery that chesed is an attribute of God. It is the affectionate side of his character - he is a God of abundant chesed. It is out of his chesed that he saves and forgives man. Lastly it is God's desire that man return this gift of chesed. It is the appeal to the inner conduct of man. Man is to show chesed for God and for his fellow man because God has first shown his chesed upon man.

There is only one conclusion we may draw from this description and that is that chesed is the primitive forerunner Agape. As we shall see in the next section agape is also a gift from God. It too characterizes the relation between God and man. It too is lasting, abundant, and God is a God of agape.

We cannot fully equate chesed and agape. Chesed

is limited to those who are under the covenant relation with God and the covenant is a national institution. Those under the covenant are of the Jewish race. Hence God's chesed is given to his chosen people rather than to the whole world. It is, none-the-less, the foundation upon which the New Testament authors build the full doctrine of God's Love.

CHAPTER III

ILLUSTRATIONS OF GOD'S LOVE

In the last chapter we saw that in the later Old Testament writings the word chesed had lost its common meaning of love and was used almost exclusively as a term for the relation of man to Yahweh. This was particularly true in the worshipping attitudes of the Hebrews. We now turn to the analogies or figures that are used to illustrate God's Love for Israel.

The Covenant

The first of these is the idea of the covenant. This is expressed in Hebrew by the word berith which means a "fetter" or "bond."¹ If this berith was between equals then the 'covenant' would be one of an agreement. If, however, it was between superior and inferior (God and man) then it would be a law or commandment. The early strata of the Old Testament assume the existence of this covenant between Yahweh and the people of Israel. There are several covenants to be found in the Old Testament: (1) those early ones which we may call patriarchal, i.e. with Noah (Gen 6:18, 9:8-17), and with Abraham (Gen 15:18, 17:2-21, later

¹ Knudson, op. cit., p. 176.

confirmed to Isaac and Jacob); (2) the 'covenant' given to Moses at Mt. Sinai (Ex 19:5, 34:10); and (3) the ratification of this Mosaic Covenant at Moab (Deut 29:1). These early covenants are basic to the Hebrew religious thinking, so basic in fact that, as we shall see, they are carried over into the thinking of the early Christian Church. The important covenant for our purpose is the Mosaic Covenant. It is termed by Dr. Hastings "the constitution of Israel." This covenant is ratified by the blood of a sacrificial victim in a ceremony in which Moses sprinkles the blood over the altar (which represents Yahweh) and then upon the people as a collective unit.²

The meaning of this ritual is explained by the following quotation from Oesterley and Robinson's book The Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development:

"The blood is the life, the vital essence. Two parties, at present independent one of another, are to be united in a single whole, and, to secure the desired union, a third party is introduced. Its life is taken from it and made available for the other two. Both come under it, both are included in it, the same vital essence now covers and embraces the two. They are thus no longer independent entities, they are one, finding their unity with each other in their unity with that third party whose blood now covers them both. Till this point is reached, however near they might have brought one to another, they are merely contiguous; now they are continuous, and form parts of a single indivisible whole. We might almost say that now Yahweh is Himself included

² Bade, op. cit., p. 76.

in the term Israel; henceforward it will connote not merely a human community, but one of which He is a member."³

Such a concept of the covenant as this is at the outset more than the legal relation which one usually derives from the covenant-idea as found in the Book of the Covenant (Ex 20:22-23-33). The covenant codes are one expression of the covenant relation between Yahweh and His people. There is a legal obligation upon the Israelite to obey the commandments of Yahweh; "This day Yahweh thy God commandeth thee to do these statutes and ordinances: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul. Thou hast avouched Yahweh this day to be thy God, and that thou wouldest walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and harken unto His voice: and Yahweh hath avouched thee this day to be a people for His own possession, as He hath promised thee, and that thou shouldest keep all His commandments; and to make thee high above all nations that He hath made, in praise and in name, and in honor; and that thou mayest be a holy people unto Yahweh, thy God, as He hath spoken." (Am. St. Deut 26:16-19.)

The other part of the covenant relation is found in the idea of Yahweh uniting himself with his people in an

³ Oesterly & Robinson, op. cit., p. 157.

organic bond and his part of the covenant is the promise of his loving-kindness (chesed) to his people. In return for which his people are to obey his laws and commandments. The covenant stands, therefore, as a symbol of Yahweh's chesed for his chosen people. We need to remember that this covenant was between God and a particular nation or people. The individual came under the covenant automatically by virtue of his birth and not by his conscious, intentional acceptance of the covenant. He was under the covenant, whether he willed to be or not, by the simple fact of his heritage.

The Marriage

This idea of the covenant leads directly to the second analogy with which we must deal - the idea of Israel as the bride of Yahweh. The idea of a god being the husband of a people was not new in primitive Semitic religions. In many primitive religions the god, which is anthropomorphic, is responsible for the increase of the land. To the naive mind the god fertilizes the land by some means similar to that of human reproduction. The local god, therefore, becomes the husband of the land. Moreover, it is a common belief among these primitive people that man may help the local god in this work of fertilization; and hence we have the rise of the fertility cults and temple

or sanctuary prostitution. When the Israelites first entered Canaan they came into contact with a Baalism based on these beliefs.⁴

Hosea takes this common sexual metaphor and raises it out of its primitive context by idealizing the idea of Yahweh as the husband of Israel, "I will betroth thee unto me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know Yahweh." (Hos 2:19-20.) Yahweh becomes the loving, ideal husband of Israel; he showers upon her all his gifts and affections and yet that is not enough, for Israel does not return his love. She pays him back by turning to the Baals of Canaan and becomes the unfaithful wife, the harlot. The enormity of this action of Israel is even clearer when we realize the position of the wife in the Hebrew family. The husband might have more than one wife, he might even have concubines. The relative position of wife and concubine was determined by the husband's whim and favor.⁵ The wife seems to be the property of the husband, he has supreme authority over her, and she has no redress for wrong, or right of divorce from him.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 60-61.

⁵ James Hastings, Dictionary of the Bible (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1947), p. 259.

If this is the common status of the wife how much more potent is Hosea's use of the husband-wife analogy between Yahweh and his people. Israel as Yahweh's wife is his property, he is the supreme authority over her. But Israel breaks this family relationship and showers her 'affections' on other gods.

It is at this point that Hosea makes his distinctive contribution to religious thinking. Hosea had expressed the covenant in terms of the marriage bond which Israel had externally broken. The bond, however, still existed, for Israel had not the right to divorce her husband; moreover she had been made one with him under the terms of the covenant ceremony. Hosea grasps the idea expressed earlier in Exodus 34:6-7 of Yahweh as a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in chesed and truth; keeping chesed for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin. Yahweh will forgive his wayward wife her sins and transgressions, if she will return to him and abide with him. And so Yahweh cries out, "I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim: for I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath." (Hos 11:9.) Yahweh's anger over his wife's sin is controlled by his chesed for her. And so, again and again, we find the prophets calling Israel to

return to Yahweh who will forgive and take Israel unto himself again. (Hos 6:1-2.) Yahweh's chesed is constant, it is sure and Israel may have it if she will turn unto him and obey his commandments.

Later prophets use the marriage metaphor over and over again in their teachings. It is always with the same emphasis: that Yahweh has taken Israel to wife, Israel has played the harlot, and Yahweh will take her back if she will turn to him. The prophet Ezekiel gives us one of the best examples of the marriage metaphor in its relation to the binding quality of the covenant, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord Yahweh, and thou becamest mine." (Ezek 16:8.) Ezekiel brings the covenant relation, the unity of the two under the covenant, into context with the marriage relation. In a sense the idea of marriage becomes the symbol of the unity or oneness of the covenant bond; and essential to this bond is the love of Yahweh for his chosen people Israel.

Fatherhood

We turn now to the analogy of Yahweh as the Father of Israel. This metaphor is not often used, about 19

times, but it does appear in the oldest strata of the Hebrew writings, Exodus 4:22 (J), "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, thus saith Yahweh, 'Israel is my son, my first-born.'" The majority of uses are a simple statement that Yahweh is the Father of Israel: Jeremiah 3:4, "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father"; Jer 3:19b, "And I said ye shall call me My Father"; Deuteronomy 32:6 (Song of Moses), "Do ye thus requite Yahweh, O foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee?"; or Isaiah 64:8, "But now, O Yahweh, thou art our Father."⁶ In some cases the analogy is found in poetic parallelism; e.g. Psalms 103:13, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so Yahweh pitieth them that fear him."⁷ And in other cases the analogy is that of Israel as the son or children of Yahweh: Hosea 1:10, "Yet the number of the children of Israel Ye are the sons of the living God"; or Hos 11:1, "When Israel was a child, then I loved him."⁸

Some of these passages are worthy of special note because of the context in which we find the Father-son relationship. In Deuteronomy 14:1-2 we find the family

⁶ See also Jer 31:9, Is 63:16, II Sam 7:14, Ps 68:5 & 89:26, Mal 1:6 & 2:10.

⁷ See also Deut 1:31 and 8:5.

⁸ See also Ex 4:22, Jer 31:20, Deut 14:1, and Is 43:6.

relation combined with the covenant idea, "Ye are the children of Yahweh your God ... for thou art a holy people unto Yahweh thy God, and Yahweh hath chosen thee a people for his own possession." The 89th Psalm carries this one step farther by linking the idea of chesed with the covenant and the family relation, "He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, My God, and the Rock of my salvation. I also will make him my first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth. My loving-kindness will I keep for him forevermore; and my covenant shall stand fast with him." (Ps 89:26-28.) Isaiah 63:16 also carries the idea of salvation with it, "thou, O Yahweh, art our Father; our Redeemer from everlasting is thy name." In two passages the Fatherhood of Yahweh is used other than affectionately. Both of these are in Malachi 1:6 and 2:10, "A son honoreith his father, and a servant his master; if then I am a father, where is mine honor? and if I am a master, where is my fear? saith Yahweh of hosts unto you." And, "Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why then do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" One of these deals with man's relation to God, the other with his relation to his fellow man. Behind both of these, however, is the idea of the family relation and the responsibilities that go with a family tie.

We cannot overlook the fact that in most primitive religions the fatherhood of the local god was a fatherhood of actual descent. The god was in some sense the ancestor of the tribe. The later Old Testament idea, however, is far removed from the primitive idea. Yahweh is the father because he is the creator, and because he has chosen to enter into a covenant relation with the people of Israel. Man is created in the image of God, rather than begotten of God. The Divine fatherhood is, therefore, a gift of grace. It is through this grace that Israel was made into a nation. The sonship of Israel is a national or group sonship and not an individual sonship.⁹ Since Divine fatherhood was a gift of grace it was a spiritual relationship, a figure of Yahweh's love or chesed.

There is one problem that has come out of some of the considerations of both this and the preceding chapter. It is simply this. We have been discussing the loving, affectionate side of Yahweh's character. We have shown how Hosea taught Yahweh's desire for man's actions to spring from an inner ethical conduct based on love; but here and there we have touched on the antithesis of Yahweh's love. Yahweh was not always the loving God, full of chesed. He

⁹ W. R. Smith, The Religion of the Semites (London: A. & C. Black Ltd., 1923), pp. 40-41.

may have been slow to anger but when his anger was aroused it was visited unto the third and fourth generations! As we saw in Malachi 1:6, Yahweh was not only the Father of Israel, but was a father who demanded the honor of his children and the fear of his servants; and in Hosea 9:9 Yahweh is an angered husband who will inflict upon Israel a great penalty. Let us look briefly, therefore, into the Old Testament idea of the wrath of Yahweh.

God's Wrath

We have seen earlier in our discussion that Yahweh was a God of law and order. He entered into a covenant relation with his people; these people were to obey a certain set of laws. Also Yahweh was an active, personal God who was working in the course of his people's lives. Moreover, Yahweh was holy. He was a God who was incalculable and mysterious and so was unknown and to be feared.

"Translated into psychological terms holiness in early thought took the form of wrath and jealousy. 'Jealousy,' as Cheyne says, 'is the affectional manifestation of the divine holiness.' And the same might be said of the divine wrath, for jealousy is only a specialized form of the divine anger. Whenever the divine holiness was offended, whether by heathen nations, by the Israelites, or by any profane person or thing, the inevitable psychological reaction was wrath. This was naturally suggested by human analogy. As conceived in the Old Testament the divine wrath was akin to human passion. It was not always thought of as controlled by justice. Left to itself, it might overleap the bounds of equity."¹⁰

¹⁰ Knudson, op. cit., p. 145.

Consequently we find Uzzah was struck dead in his attempt to save the Ark of Yahweh from falling over. A breach of the Law of Yahweh was a sin and the wrath of Yahweh would be visited upon him who broke the Law.

"A man or a nation which violated His laws thereby let loose into the world an evil force, a living and deadly thing, which no power, whether human or divine, could stay from its ultimate fulfillment. ... It may not be true to say that Yahweh punishes, but His action is negative rather than positive; He leaves the sinner to his sin, as, being self-consistent, He must do, and the disaster in which the sin culminates is the inevitable and inexorable issue of man's own action and thought."¹¹

Such, then, is the other side of the character of Yahweh. His wrath is great and awful; it is part of the revelation of the Divine character but it is not antithetic to the quality of chesed which is our main concern. Yahweh's wrath is complementary to his loving-kindness and mercy; they are both part of his Divine character. The solution to the problem comes through the prophets' repetition of the idea that Yahweh's anger or wrath is subordinate to his love and mercy. We have already seen how again and again the prophets and the psalmists repeated the idea that Yahweh was 'slow to anger, and abundant in loving-kindness.' Moreover, we saw how the prophets foretold the doom, the awful reality of the angry God that would visit Israel, but they always held out the hope that Israel could repent and

¹¹ Oesterly & Robinson, op. cit., p. 230.

return to Yahweh and there find forgiveness, "Come let us return to Yahweh; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. After two days he will revive us: and on the third day he will raise us up and we shall live before him." (Hos 6:1-2.) The wrath of Yahweh is mighty but his chesed is greater. The condition for receiving chesed, however, is always that men fulfill his side of the covenant.

CONCLUSIONS TO PART I

As we look back over the first section of this thesis we see a number of rather interesting developments in the idea of Divine love. The affectionate side of Yahweh's character is present in the earliest strata of the Old Testament. The attribute is expressed by the term chesed which may be variously translated "loving-kindness," "mercy," "loyal-love," "goodness." Moreover, it is linked with truth, righteousness, and justice. Chesed is a gift which is given to man by God. God's chesed brings out in men the spirit to work together or to respond with chesed for each other. It also calls for man to respond to Yahweh's chesed with a love and obedience to God and His Will and Commandments.

At its highest it appeals to the inner attitude in man from which spring the highest motives and conduct. It, at points, reaches a state of personalization of hypostatization. But behind it is always the idea of chesed as an attribute and part of the character of Yahweh. The antithesis of chesed is wrath, but of the two in Yahweh, chesed is the predominate; for from his chesed springs his forgiveness. The various prophets of the Old Testament use different analogies to illustrate the idea of chesed: the covenant, the family, and fatherhood. Behind each of these, and basic to understanding them, is the idea of the loving-

kindness and mercy and love of Yahweh for the objects of his creation.

In the pre-Christian uses of agape we found that there was little to be learned from the study of the profane Greek use of the term. It was used in connection with the gods of the mystery cults and in some cases approached a religious-ethical meaning. Its greatest use was in the LXX, in which the majority of its uses are in commonplace contexts. In amatory poetry, however, it does contain a lasting quality. It was used in connection with the covenant idea. It was also used to describe one step in the process of knowing God. Most important, however, was the fact that it, of all the Greek words for love, was used (with its verb form) as the general LXX term for love. We also saw that it was not the translation for the Hebrew word chesed.¹

There are several important points which we must now keep in mind as we turn to the New Testament. First, there is no one word, or phrase, or analogy in the Old Testament (English, Hebrew, or Greek) that adequately expresses the totality of the idea of Divine love. Second, the idea of Divine love as a quality or attribute of Yahweh

¹ The primary LXX translation for chesed is eleus (pity, mercy, compassion, a God of mercy). Polueleos (abundant mercy) and dikaiousune (righteousness) were used in some cases.

is not the totality of his character; it is a part of his character. It may be the predominant trait in his character but there is always the other side, anger and wrath, in the Divine nature. Third, the character of Divine love is a constant, it is sure, and it is a gift which comes from God to man. Fourth, the idea of Divine love is never more inclusive or universal than is the universality of God. If God is limited to those in covenant relation with him, so is his love and mercy limited to them. As the monotheistic concept develops, the chesed of God is extended to more people so that in the Book of Jonah we see Yahweh's love given to those outside of the covenant relation. The covenant comes to include those outside of Israel. This, however, was never generally accepted by the Hebrew people as a whole. Even down to the time of Christ the love of Yahweh was primarily for those under the covenant with him.

PART II

NEW TESTAMENT AGAPE

CHAPTER IV

THE HYMN TO LOVE

We turn now to the New Testament and take as our mission the task of investigating the meaning of divine love under the new covenant. We find that the predominant word (verb and noun) for love is agapao, agape. We find that phileo (was in the LXX) is also used, but eros and storge (which was in the LXX) are not found in the New Testament. Moreover, we find that agape is the general term for love (as it was in the LXX): for example, Lk 11:43, "Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in synagogues and salutations in the market places." Or Jn 12:43, "for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." We also find that, as in the Old Testament, there is more than one word and phrase used to express the idea of divine love: e.g., Jn 16:27, "for the Father himself loves (philei) you, because you have loved (pephilekate) me and have believed that I came from the Father." Or Jn 5:20, "For the Father loves (philei) the son, and shows him all that he himself is doing."

Our task, therefore, is to investigate agape and phileo so that we may see their use in relation to God's love for man. We will also have to follow through the New Testament analogies of the New Covenant, the Fatherhood of

God, and the idea of divine love as shown in some of the parables of Christ. Before we can begin our investigation, however, we will have to clear the ground by arriving at the order in which we will treat the New Testament writings and by clarifying several problems.

Our first problem is the assumption that the New Testament authors were well versed in the Old Testament. That is, the ideas and concepts of the Old Testament form the foundation and springboard for the ideas and concepts of the New Testament. For example, the New Testament concept of Christ as the Messiah is meaningless unless it is set against the Old Testament idea of the messianic hope. But the New Testament idea transcends and gives a totally new meaning to the old idea. Nevertheless, the basis for the new idea is found in the old. Our question therefore is, To what extent do the New Testament authors give a new meaning to and transcend the old idea of divine love?

Our second problem is the question of St. Paul's familiarity with the LXX. We know that Paul was conversant with the Old Testament (the Law and the Prophets) from the fact that he was a Pharisee and from the way in which he uses the Old Testament in his writings. We also know that Paul was born outside of Palestine and that he lived and ministered in a Greek speaking world. Also there are traces in Paul's writings that reflect the style of the LXX. If

this be true it explains the reason for Paul's using the term agape as the general term for love: (1) those Jews with whom he worked would be familiar with this term in the LXX; (2) by using it he would avoid any confusion with the associations and ideas of Platonic eros, and (3) since Paul was the first writing Christian of whom we know it would be probable that later writers would follow his lead. We are left, however, with the question of why Paul and the other authors seem to use agape and phileo interchangeably when they speak of divine love.

Our third problem is to arrive at the order in which we will treat the New Testament Books. St. Paul and St. John are the primary users of the word agape: over half of the occurrences are in the Pauline Epistles and the majority of the rest are in the Johannine writings (Gospel and three Epistles). In treating the use of the word we will take the New Testament writings in their chronological order, and our problem is to arrive at this chronology. There are, of course, oral and written traditions behind the Gospel writings that are older than the writings of St. Paul. But we do not know in detail what this tradition was. We have gone through a reconstruction of the "Q" document and the word agape does not appear in it.¹ We will, therefore, have

¹ Adolph Harnack, The Sayings of Jesus (New York: Putnams, 1908).

to start with the writings of Paul to see what meanings he gives the word agape. We will consider his writings in the following order: I & II Thessolonians, Galatians, I & II Corinthians, Romans, Philemon, Colossians, Philippians, and Ephesians. This order is generally in agreement with the standard Bible Commentaries, except where there was great disagreement among them in which case the author has chosen the date he thinks to be the best.² Perhaps the most questionable placement is that of Ephesians. It is felt by many Biblical scholars that the Epistle is a genuine Pauline work as it contains much real Pauline thinking; e.g., Dr. E. F. Scott in the Moffatt Commentary. Other scholars, however, feel that the Epistle is a later work, not by Paul, that served as an introduction to the Pauline Corpus. We have, therefore, placed the Epistle with the Pauline writings but at the end. We will not include the Pastoral Epistles as the general opinion is that, even though they contain genuine Pauline thinking they are not the work of the Apostle. We will next take up the Johannine writings and from there make a comparison and synthesis of our finds in the writings of Paul and John. Our last section will deal with the idea of divine love as expressed in the various

² The choise of dating is made on the basis of the evidence put forth by the conflicting schools of thought. We have chosen that date which we think best fits the evidence submitted.

metaphors and analogies found in the Synoptic Gospels and a comparison of this idea with that of Paul and John.

I Thessalonians:

Paul has hardly begun to write this letter before he brings into it the concept of divine love, 1:2-3,³ "We give thanks to God always for you all, ... remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." In this manner Paul introduces us to the trinity of faith, hope, and love, a trio which we will find repeated often throughout his writings, and one which we shall see later is the goal or virtue of the Christian life. Each of these Paul connects with Christ: the Christian goal is faith in Him, love in Him, and hope in Him. Moreover, Paul connects each of the trio with its corollary in action: work, labor, and patience. That is the Christian is to work in faith in Christ. He is to labor in love of one another, and he is to be patient in a quiet hope. Each of the three virtues has a word of action that goes with it. It would seem, therefore, that this trinity of virtues is achieved only through action on the part of man. This does not deny that they are gifts. They may be, but they require an activity on the

³ The Revised Standard Version is used for all New Testament passages, unless otherwise stated.

part of man to complete them.

In the third chapter Paul again brings faith and love together. I Thes 3:6, "But now that Timothy has come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love and reported that you always remember us kindly and long to see us." But there is a distinction made between the two virtues, for Paul goes on to elaborate on the Thessalonians' faith, v 7 & 8, "...we have been comforted about you through your faith; for now we live, if you stand fast in the Lord. ...praying earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith." Paul's primary concern is with their faith. He distinguishes between faith in the Lord and love to one another in 3:12, "and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all men, as we do to you." We see that Paul has in this section, 3:6-13, made a distinction between faith in the Lord and love between men. But the Father is the one who gives the increase of this love, and the aim of this love (v 13) is to establish man's heart in holiness before God.

In chapter five Paul again brings in his triad of faith, hope, and love. I Thes 5:8, "But, since we belong to the day, let us be sober, and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation

through our Lord Jesus Christ." He has used for the three virtues the highly pictorial analogy of the Christian's armor, and has again related them to man's action since he uses them in an exhortation to live the Christian life. In 5:13 Paul again uses love as a man to man relation (as in 3:12), "But we beseech you, . . . to respect those who . . . are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work." This implies purely a man to man relationship but when we combine with this the idea in 3:12 then the Lord will give the increase to this love.

II Thessalonians:

In his second letter to the people of Thessalonica Paul again uses agape in connection with faith and in the same way in which he used it in I Thess 3:6-13: faith in God is coupled with love between men. In 1:3 Paul writes, "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, as fitting, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing." This clearly implies the man to man relationship and if we follow the lead of I Thess 3:12 we may say that God is giving these people the increase of love. Paul echoes this idea in Chapter Three of his second letter. II Thes 3:5 reads, "May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ." In the

first letter to Thessalonica the Lord gave the increase, in this letter the Lord gives the direction. But there is a new element in the latter passage which goes beyond the former. Here love seems to be an attribute or quality of God. Goodspeed makes this clearer, "May the Lord guide your hearts into a sense of God's love." Men's hearts are to be guided into God's love. Earlier in the second letter Paul makes another use of agape. In 2:10 he used love as a means of responding to truth, "and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved." Love here is the relation between man and an idea, truth. Truth may be used in the same sense as is wisdom in the Old Testament, e.g. as a surrogate for God. Truth may be so personalized that it is really a synonym for Christ. They refused to love Christ (or God) and so be saved. Love is here used in the same way in which it was used in the Old Testament in relation to Wisdom, as a step in the process of knowing God.

Galatians:

In the fifth chapter Paul gives a little sermon on love. In 5:6 he reflects an idea which we saw in the writings of Hosea, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is of any avail, but faith working through love." Paul, like Hosea, is appealing not to the

works of the Law but to the inner attitude of man from which springs his ethical conduct and his religious beliefs. Before Christ, the Law (circumcision) is nothing. Faith is the important thing in Christ's eyes and that faith works through love. Paul then turns this appeal to a practical effect by saying (Gal 5:13-14), "But through love be servants of one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'"

This again simply points up the difference between the old law and the new, which is the supreme law, for in 5:22 we read, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law." Love here is simply one of the fruits of the Spirit. But these fruits are a law unto themselves over which there is no greater law.

I Corinthians:

In this epistle Paul gives one of the greatest New Testament doctrines on love (13:1-14:1). But before we come to this passage there are two uses of love which should be considered. In 4:21 Paul asks the Corinthians, "Shall I come to you with a rod, or with love in a spirit of gentleness?" Paul has received reports of gross immorality among the Corinthians. He questions them should he come with a rod to chastize them or with love to lead them.

This use is a man to man relation but I feel that Paul is tempering his attitude; he would like to beat them with a rod, but he will treat them as Christ did the woman taken in adultery, with love.

The passage in 8:1-2 is a rather difficult one to treat but Dr. Moffatt, in his commentary on I Corinthians, gives us the clue to Paul's thinking. "Knowledge," writes Paul, "puffs up, but love builds up. . . . But if one loves God, one is known by Him." Paul uses the term 'puffs up' only with the Corinthian Christians. It would seem that the Corinthians have put on the air of self-conceit because they have the knowledge of Christ. Paul opposes this Pharisaic attitude by pointing out that true knowledge is knowledge of God, and one can only know God through loving Him. Love, therefore, builds up and edifies.⁴

We come now to the great hymn to love, I Cor. 13:1 - 14:1. We will divide this hymn into two parts: (1) 13:1-3 and (2) 13:4 - 14:1. The first of these points out the importance and need for love,

"If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging Cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing."

⁴ James Moffatt, The First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers), pp. 104-105.

The gravest defect in the character of man is the lack of love. He may have the greatest and most wonderful powers, but he is nothing if he has not love. Love is the one characteristic that makes man of value. In the second part of the hymn Paul describes the character of true love:

"Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous, boastful, arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends (other things: prophecy, tongues, imperfect knowledge, childish ways, etc., will pass away), for now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

All these things which Paul has listed are what he means by love. At the end he again brings in the triad of Christian virtues and points out that the greatest of these three is love. If we look back to the passage in Galatians (5:22) where he lists the fruits of the Spirit we see something now which was not expressly said but which was implied in the former passage - that love is the greatest of the fruits of the Spirit. Paul concludes this hymn with (14:1), "Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts." Love, therefore, is the one criterion of value. The worst defect in man is the lack of love. It is the one important character for man to have, more important than prophecy or tongues, or knowledge. It is one of the three virtues, and the greatest of them. It is the one aim, the one goal after

which the Christian is to seek. And yet Paul does not minimize the importance of the other virtues and gifts. The Christian is to seek after these and to desire them, for they, too, are important. As great as love is, it is not all there is; "and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts," not just love but all of the gifts. "So abide in faith, hope, and love," not just love but all three virtues.

Paul again emphasizes the value producing factor of love⁵ in 16:14 when he writes, "Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong, Let all that you do be done in love." We might well add, "For if you do it not in love, it is as nothing." But again we notice that Paul couples love with faith: be watchful in faith, stand firm in faith, be courageous in faith, be strong in faith, and make it of value by doing it in love. Paul closes this letter with the words (16:24), "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen." The relationship here is man to man, the founder of the Corinthian Church to his people. And yet behind Paul's love for his people stands the love and grace of Christ Jesus. This would seem to be a reflection of the concept found in the Old Testament that man was to love his fellow man for the sake of God. It is a love

⁵ When we refer to love as the 'value producing factor,' we mean that it is the one criterion that makes man of value. Without love man is nothing. With love he is of value in himself, to other men, and to God.

which is in Christ, which is done for Christ's sake.

II Corinthians:

In II Cor 2 Paul reflects on the scolding which he gave them in the first letter. So he writes (2:4), "For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you." The relation is man to man but what he wrote had value because Paul wrote as he did out of love. Again in the same chapter Paul calls on the Corinthian Christians to show their love for one of their number who has gone astray (2:8), "I beg you to re-affirm your love for him." Paul is in effect saying, 'Let him, the sinner, know that you love him even as I have re-affirmed my love for you and as Christ loves us.'

So far Paul has used agape in terms of the triad of Christian virtues and as the value-producing factor in man's actions. In 5:14, however, he gives the term a new meaning, "For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore, all have died." Paul here makes clear something that has been in the background of his writing and thinking. Christ's love for us is the controlling factor. Christ's love gives meaning and value to man's love, and behind His love stands His death in which we are all united. So behind your love is His love. This thought again reminds us of the Old

Testament idea that man's love stems from Yahweh, or that man loves his fellow man for Yahweh's sake.

In 6:6 Paul uses love as one of many virtues; it is listed with knowledge, truthful speech, forbearance, and other "weapons of righteousness." Important as love is, other factors have to go along with it to make a complete teaching. He repeats this again in 8:7-8, "Now as you excel in everything - in faith, in utterance, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in your love for us - see that you excel in this gracious work also. I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love is also genuine." And, in 8:24, "So give proof, before the churches, of your love and of our boasting about you to these men." In this eighth chapter Paul has called upon the Corinthians to prove their love, to prove that God hath increased it and that their faith is of value, by showing their love in works. The works Paul refers to is an offering which Titus is gathering for the saints (in Jerusalem).

Paul closes this letter, as he had closed others, with a prayer. In this prayer he is referring to the Old Testament teaching of Yahweh as a God abundant in chesed, (13:11-14), "... and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with an holy kiss.... The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship

of the Holy Spirit be with you all." Love is an attribute of God. Paul has used this attribute in the context of a blessing to his followers. It is almost a reflection of David's blessing to the men of Jabesh-gilead in II Samuel 2:5-6. Paul's blessing is, of course, more than David's simple blessing for combined with the love of God are the grace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

Romans:

In his earlier letters Paul has said that God gives the increase of love. In Romans 5:5-8 he expands this, by showing us how the increase is given. "And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us. While we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ... But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." The Holy Ghost is the means by which God increases the power of love in us. Moreover, the proof for God's love is found in the death and resurrection of God's Son. Paul goes next to the lasting quality of love, 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, (and so forth) ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life nor angels, (etc.) ... will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our

Lord." Again, we have the idea shown in the Old Testament that the mountains will be destroyed before the love of Yahweh will fail. Paul gives a long list of evils that might befall us but says that they will not be able to take away the love of God in Christ Jesus. It is a lasting and sure love that cannot be destroyed. And it is proven, for God did not spare his own Son but gave Him for us.

In 12:9 Paul again exhorts his readers to "Let love be genuine" and, "Love one another with a brotherly affection." He goes on, 13:10, with the idea he had in II Thessalonians 5:13-14, that love is the fulfillment of the law (Rom 3:9-10), "The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law." Paul here is simply restating to the Romans what he has already written to the people of Thessalonica.

Paul has spoken of love in connection with God and in connection with Christ. He has also said that God gives His love through the Holy Ghost. In 15:30, however, Paul connects love directly to the Holy Ghost by writing, "I appeal to you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, ..." There could be two meanings

in this passage: (1) the love of the Spirit as one with the love of God and the love of Christ, or (2) Paul could mean by it the love which the Spirit inspires. The latter would indicate that the Holy Spirit is the mediator of God's love to man, while the former would make the Holy Spirit an equal with God and Christ. We are inclined to feel that both of these are implied by Paul. The distinction between the idea of the Holy Spirit as the mediator of God's love and the Holy Spirit as an equal with God and Christ is a difference of emphasis. The latter is a full expression of the Holy Trinity. The former is a primitive trinitarian thinking, i.e. the realization that the Spirit is in some way a part of the Godhead.

Philemon:

In this short letter Paul uses the term agape three times. The first two occurrences of the term describe the man to man relation, vv 5 to 7, "Because I hear of your love and of the faith which you have toward the Lord Jesus and all the Saints, and I pray that the sharing of your faith may promote the knowledge of all the good that is ours in Christ. For I have derived much joy and comfort from your love, my brother, because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you." We again see a distinction in this passage which Paul has made in earlier letters (see I Thessalonians 3:6-8), the distinction between

faith in Christ and love among the saints. In verse 5 Paul puts both faith and love together in context with both the Lord Jesus and the saints. In verse 6 he relates faith to Christ and in verse 7 love is related to the saints. This does not negate the fact that man is to love Christ. He is to love Christ, but in this passage Paul's primary concern is with the love of man to man. In verse 9 Paul again re-echoes an idea which we found in the Old Testament, "Yet for love's sake I prefer to appeal to you." This parallels the idea of David's performing an act of mercy for the sake of the chesed which Yahweh had shown his father. If we are to find any meaning in this whole passage it will be from the fact that Paul is appealing to Philemon to show his 'Christian love' for one of his fellow 'saints' and that, in so doing, this 'Christian love' is to transcend the barrier of the master-slave relation.

Colossians:

The distinction between faith in Christ and love of man for man is illustrated again in Colossians 1:4, "Because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love which you have for all the saints." In verse 8 Paul sheds some light on this relation: "and Epaphras has made known to us your love in the Spirit." This love which man has for man comes, and is given the increase, by God. In verse 13, however, Paul gives a new meaning to the term

agape, "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved (agapes) Son." Agapes has been variously translated as "dear," "beloved," "loving," etc. The significant point is that Paul now applies the term as a relation between God and Christ Jesus.

The last two occurrences of agape in Colossians (2:2 and 3:14) are simply re-echoes of the man to man relation, "Let them be knit together in love," and, "All above all these put on love."

Philippians:

In 1:9 Paul reaffirms the idea that love is one of the virtues and that its increase comes as a gift of God, "And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment, ...filled with the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ." In 1:16 he contrasts those who preach the Gospel out of envy and rivalry with those who preach it out of love "The latter do it out of love." This love as we saw earlier in his great hymn to love, would be the factor that gives value to their preaching. He carries this idea on in 2:12, "So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any incentive of love, any participation in the Spirit, ...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love," Again we see that love is a virtue of the Christian life, the virtue

that gives value to the works of man.

Ephesians:

We have a rather interesting development in this letter, for we find the term agape is used therein more than in any other Pauline writing except I Corinthians (in the hymn to love). It makes little difference whether Paul wrote the epistle or not, for in any case the frequency of agape is significant: (1) if Paul did write the Epistle then it serves to emphasize his own teaching on divine love, or (2) if the letter was an introduction to the Pauline corpus, then it points to the important position held by the idea of divine love in the minds of Paul's interpreters.

We see reflected in this Epistle many of the concepts which Paul has taught in other letters. For example, the distinction that Paul has made between faith in Christ and love one for another is reflected in 1:15, "For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints." It is also shown in 4:2 "with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love," and, again, in 5:2, "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God." We also see in 4:2 the use of love (agape) in connection with other virtues;

and in 5:2 we see the reflection of the idea that we are "to walk in love" which is a parallel to the love of Christ. None of these teachings are new; they have all been treated in other letters.

In Eph. 1:4, the author turns to the deeper meaning of agape "even as he (God) chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ." Here is the reflection of the idea in Philippians 1:9, that love is a gift from God through Jesus Christ. God has, through his gift of love (Christ), called us to be his sons. But more important than this re-emphasis is the idea that we are the chosen of God. There is here some reflection of the covenant idea of the Old Testament. It would be, however, a new covenant with a new people; a covenant between God and the Christians, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

The author again expresses the idea of Christ as the gift of love from God in 2:4, "But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with him." Here we raise the question of the relation of grace and love. God's great love resulted in his gift of Christ and yet the author writes, "By grace you have been saved." It would almost seem from

this that the outpouring of God's love is his grace.

Ephesians reflects still another of Paul's teachings. In I Cor. 8:1-2 Paul had the idea that love builds up and edifies, that knowledge of God comes through loving Him. In Eph. 3:17-19, we see the same idea re-emphasized: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love may have the power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."

This notion of the building power of love, which may simply be one aspect of it as the value-producing factor, is combined with the concept of love as a relation between the saints, and the two are connected to the idea of the Church in 4:15-16, "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love." In Colossians Paul had used the analogy of Christ as the head of the body which was the Church. Here the author re-uses this thought and combines with it the concept of the growing power of love. Paul has already said, however, that the increase in love is God-given. So

the value of the Church, and its power to grow, lies in the relation of love between the saints, and between them and Christ.

Lastly, the author closes this letter in the familiar Pauline manner (6:23-24), "Peace be to the brethren, and love and faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying." As in Paul's endings, the emphasis is on God's love for man and on man returning that love.

Conclusions

Let us review Paul's use of the term agape. At the outset we see how Paul had built upon the ideas of the Old Testament concept of divine love, and how he reflects many of them in his writings. Love is a quality or attribute of God as it was in the Old Testament. Paul, however, carries this a step farther by applying love to the other members of the Holy Trinity as well: love is also an attribute or characteristic of Christ and of the Holy Ghost.

Another point at which Paul reflects the Old Testament teaching is in relation to man performing an act of love that parallels God's act of love; that is, doing it for God's sake. God has loved us, has given us the great gift of love, and so we are morally bound to give love in return. But Paul goes beyond; he transcends the Old Testament

in that he places the primary emphasis on man's achieving this love (this gift) as one of the three Christian virtues. Two factors enter into the achieving of perfect love: (1) the fact that love and its increase are a gift from God, and (2) that man has to respond to this gift by an activity on his part. Namely, by faith in Christ and love of one to another among the saints.

A third point in which Paul reflects the Old Testament is in the concept of love as being an intangible, e.g. an hypostatization. At times in his writing love almost became a synonym for Christ, who himself was God's great gift of love.

Like Hosea, Paul holds that love is the fulfilling of the law, but we need to remember that there are now a new Law and a new Covenant. Both of these ideas will be taken up in detail in chapter 6. The fulfillment of the law, says Paul, is to love one another.

At two points Paul seems to step out into new territory. In these he truly surpasses the Old Testament idea of love. The first of these is the idea that love leads to knowledge of God and of Christ, love buildeth up and edifies. The other is the idea found in the Hymn to Love that love is the value-producing factor. This means that whatever it may be that man is or does is worthless unless it is done in love and that love is God-given. Love is the

element that makes man's action valuable. And yet we have to remember that even in this great hymn to love Paul puts forth a check-rein. Love is not the all in all; it is great, but there are also faith and hope and the other gifts or fruits of the Spirit. These also are important and are not to be overlooked. Paul does make love the greatest of the virtues but he does not make it the only factor, the totality of the Christian life.

Before we may leave Paul there is one further problem which we must discuss. As we said earlier we were safe in assuming that Paul took the term agape from the LXX. This is the logical solution to Paul's preference for this word over other Greek words, for as we have seen it was a term that had relatively few connotations outside of the LXX, and the people to whom Paul wrote were familiar with the term. Also by using this term he would avoid the connotations of the more common Greek words for love.

We might like to say that Paul used this term strictly as a technical one for 'divine love.' But there are four passages that prevent us from doing so. First, Eph. 5:28, "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself." Even though this passage is in context with the concept of Christ and His Church it is still an admonition for the conduct of the marital relation and carries with it certain common or profane

connotations. Second, in I Cor. 16:22 Paul writes, "If anyone has no love (phileo) for the Lord, let him be accursed." This occurs in Paul's closing blessing in context with agape and carries with it more than just the idea of respect or brotherly love. Our third example is even more clear-cut, a synonym for agape. I Thes. 4:9, "But concerning love of the brethren you have no need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another." Here again phileo is equated with agape and carries connotation that the teaching of that love came from God. Our clearest example, however, of Paul failing to distinguish between phileo and agape is in Romans 12:10, "Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor." Phileo and its derivatives are here used in context with and as a synonym for the idea of genuine love (agape) as the relation between the saints in Rome.

If it were not for these four examples we might be justified in saying that Paul habitually used agape as a technical term. He preferred agape and used it as his general term for love, but these examples cast a doubt on the idea that Paul was systematic in his use of agape. The important point, however, is not what terms he may have used but the totality of the concept he puts forth on the

teaching of 'divine love.' Paul has taken the Old Testament and gone beyond it to new heights and new meanings and new insights into the character and will of God.

CHAPTER V

THE GREATEST LOVE

We turn now to the Johannine writings: the Gospel and three Epistles. These writings will be treated independently; that is, we will try not to let our Pauline conclusions influence the findings of this chapter. The purpose for doing this is so that we may later compare the teachings of Paul and John.

The Fourth Gospel:

The first two occurrences of love are found in the verb form. Jn 3:16-19, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." And "That light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light." In the first of these love is the outpouring of God's great gift to man and those who believed, who had faith or returned that love, would find in God's gift their own salvation. The second passage is a commentary on the way man receives the gift of Christ. Christ is the light but man does not turn to the light, he loves the dark. Our point here is that the word which expresses God's love for the world is the same word that expresses man's love for the dark. It would seem, therefore, that John is not using agape as a special term. This is further shown by the use of two

different words to give the same meaning. In 3:35 John writes, "The Father loves (agapa) the Son." In 5:20 we have the same phrase but with a different verb, "For the Father loves (philei) the Son." It would seem, therefore, that John made little attempt to be systematic in his choice of words. With either word we have here the idea that there is a relation of love within the Godhead itself.

In 5:42 the author re-emphasizes the notion of man loving the darkness by writing, "But I (Jesus) know that you have not the love of God within you." As in 3:19, the quality of love between man and God is not in man. It should be, man should love God; but he does not. Both of these ideas, the love of man for God and the idea of love within the Godhead, are referred to again in 8:42, "Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me,'" and in 10:17, "For this reason the Father loves me (Jesus)."

We next have two minor uses of the verb agapao. In 11:5 reads, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." This is the simple relation of Jesus' love for his fellow man. In 12:43, we find a very commonplace use of the term, "For they (Pharisees) loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." It becomes increasingly evident that John was not at all systematic in his choice of words, for in 11:3 and 11:36 John uses the word phileo as the relation between Jesus and Lazarus, while in 11:5 he

used agapao for the same relation.

In 13:1 we have a reference to Christ's love (agapao) for man, "having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end." The use of agapao in 13:23 gives us some cause to wonder about Jesus' love for his disciples. The phrase, "one of the disciples, whom Jesus loved," is repeated four times through the Gospel (13:23, 19:26, 21:7, and 21:20). It would seem from the context of each of these phrases that this disciple had some relation with Jesus that the other disciples did not have. But the strange thing is that here again John is not consistent, for in 20:2 he refers to this disciple as the one whom Jesus loves (phileo).

In 13:34-35, John reflects the ideas of the law or covenant and its relation to divine love, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another." In the Old Testament there was the Law, a law of ethical and ritual practices. Here is a new law that is based on love, love between men for the sake of Christ. It is a carrying forward of the idea we have noted before of man's ethical action being the result of God's desire.

We find in the fourteenth chapter a small sermon on the theme that the fulfillment of the law is love. In 14:15

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments." And 14:21-24, "He who has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me: and he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him. . . . If a man loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me does not keep my words." Also, in 14:28, "If you loved me, you would have rejoiced, because I go to the Father." And 14:31, "But I do as the Father commandeth me, so that the world may know that I love the Father." We see from this passage that love is not only the fulfillment of the law but also that those who fulfill the law will receive the love of God in return. Jesus holds himself up as an example, for even He fulfills the law so that the Father may know that He loves Him. Man, therefore, should fulfill the law so that the Father may know that man loves Him. The new law is that quoted above from 13:34-35, "That you love one another."

These two ideas are again shown in 15:9-17, "As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. . . . This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. . . . This I command

you, to love one another." This passage needs hardly to be commented upon as it is simply a restatement of the points already made by John: (1) The new commandment is to love one another; (2) man is to do this for the Father's sake, and (3) if man does this he will receive God's love in return.

One aspect of the new Law is carried into a prayer, 17:23-26, "So that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. ... the glory which thou hast given me in thy love, ... and I will make it known, that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." In this prayer Jesus is dealing with the idea that the Father's love for him will show man the Father's love for man and thereby give man the incentive to return that love, "that the love with which thou hast loved me may be in them." Here again we see John interchanging the two words for love. In 16:27 he uses phileo in almost the same context, "For the Father himself loves you, because you have loved me and have believed that I came from the Father." The relationships here are identical and yet John interchanges the words for love.

Our last set of passages in the Fourth Gospel appears in 21:15-17. Here again the author interchanges the two words for love, "When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love

(agapao) me more than these?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileo) you.' He said to him, 'Feed my lambs.' A second time he said to him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (agapao) me?' He said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; you know that I love (phileo) you.' He said to him, 'Tend my sheep.' He said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love (phileo) me?' And he said to Him, 'Lord, you know everything; you know that I love (phileo) you'". We see in each of these phrases except the last that Jesus asks with agapao and Peter replies with phileo. If it were not for the last question we might be justified in saying the author has made a distinction between agape and phileo by having Jesus use one and Simon the other. We cannot make too much out of this passage. If we are to take Biblical criticism seriously then we must recognize this chapter as the work of a later author. The interchanging of these words may be a case of the author thinking in Aramaic and therefore ignorant of Greek nuances.

I John:

In the First Epistle of John the author again repeats the theme of love and the Lord's Commandment. I Jn 2:5-10 is on this thought, that if we know Him we will keep His commandments "But whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected." Later in the same passage (v 10) the author uses the analogy of light and darkness,

"He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause for stumbling." Here again the 'light' may well be a surrogate for Christ, so that he who loves his brother abides in Christ. This is, then, a reflection of John 15:9-17.

In 2:15 the author again uses agapao in a common sense: "Do not love the world or the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him." We see here that love cannot be divided, one cannot love both the world and God. It is one or the other, not both.

In 3:1 love is the characteristic of the filial or family relation between God and man: "See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are." Our status as God's children is God's gift. We are made God's children through Christ, His Son. But the condition for achieving this status is that we obey the commandments of Christ, which is to love one another. The author goes on with this argument in 3:10-23, "No one who does not do right is of God, nor anyone who does not love his brother. For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another." This love of the brethren is the condition for eternal life (v 14). "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love remains

in death." The author goes on to point out that we know that for love Christ died for us (v 16). And so, if we close our hearts against our brothers, then we do not have love and we do not abide with Him (v 17). Verse 18 points to the need for man's love (and faith) to result in action, "Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth." God has commanded (v 23) that we love one another and the keeping of that command is the task of the Christian.

The author reaches his highest teaching on love in 4:7-12,

"Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us."

There are several things of interest in this passage. The author starts with the idea of love among the brotherhood and he points out that his love among the brotherhood is a condition for knowing God; for God is love, in that He sent His Son to earth to save man "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." This love is a gift from God to man, but man has to fulfill the command to

love one another. If man does that then he may know God, he abides in God and God's love is made perfect in him.

The rest of chapter four (4:13-21) is taken up with a re-emphasis upon these themes: (1) that God is love, (2) He sent His Son to save man, (3) that His command is to love one another, (4) that in fulfilling this command we come to know God and to abide in Him, (5) that we love because He loved first, and (6) that love casts out fear.

In 5:1-3 John sums up his idea of love:

"Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is a child of God, and everyone who loves the parent loves the child. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and obey his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome."

Throughout both the Gospel and the First Epistle John has been hammering again and again at the point that to know God is to love Him; and to love Him is to obey His commandments. God is love; He has shown it by His gift to mankind. The love starts with Him but it requires an active acceptance on the part of man. Man has to obey: and to obey is to love one another. The proof that man loves God is man's loving his fellow men. God is love, all his activities are done in love, "for He so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son to the end that all men might be saved." He saves in love and expects, rather demands, our love in return.

II and III John:

The Second and Third Epistles of John give only one new idea in connection with love. In both Epistles (v 1 in each) love is combined with truth; in both we read, "Whom I love in the truth." Truth here probably does not mean the abstract truth of facts, but rather the Truth of Christ or the Gospel of Christ. It may even mean Christ Himself, but in the light of II Jn 3 this is improbable since truth describes Christ's activity rather than as a surrogate for Him, "... and from Jesus Christ the Father's Son, in truth and love." Truth here probably means the revelation of God in Christ. The rest of the occurrences of agape in these Epistles re-emphasize the idea of love between Christians as the fulfillment of God's Commandment "And this is love, that we follow His commandments" (v 2). His command being "That we love one another" (v 5).

Conclusions

As we look back over the Johannine writings we see several things of great interest. First, the Fourth Gospel is commonly thought of as the Gospel of Love. We might expect the author of such a work to be consistent in his use of words. But we find that the author makes no distinction between agape and phileo. He uses them interchangeably in passages of exactly the same context and even within the same passage. Moreover, he assigns to phileo some high theological

meanings and at the same time uses agapeo in a very commonplace manner. We have, therefore, to conclude that the author of the Johannine Corpus was not, and did not intend to be, systematic in his use of words. In other words, he does not make of agape a purely technical term.

Second, we see that the author of these books drew upon the Old Testament ideas and concepts of divine love; particularly the idea of love as the fulfillment of God's law. The author seems to place his primary emphasis on the task of the Christian to fulfill the new law, "To love one another." Again and again through the Gospel and Epistles we saw the emphasis on the relation between God and man: (1) that we are to love God because He loved us first, (2) that God is love because he sent His only Son to save mankind, (3) that His Son's command is to love one another, and (4) that in fulfilling this command we come to know God and to abide in Him. God's love is not given without expecting something in return. It is given, but man has to respond to that love. There must always be an activity on the part of man. The proof of what man believes is shown forth in his action of love to his fellow man. These books also reflect the Old Testament concepts of love as an attribute of God - its lasting quality, its being a gift from God, and its relation to the covenant idea.¹

¹ For a fuller explanation of the relation between the New Law and the New Covenant see chapter VI.

Third, we see the points at which the author goes beyond the old teachings and gives us a new revelation into the meaning of divine love. The first of these is the idea that there is a relation of love between the persons of the Godhead, "The Father loves the Son." The second is the idea that love casts out fear, that where love is, there can be no fear. Fear is related to punishment and if man has obeyed the law and loved his fellow man then there is no punishment, for man has not sinned but obeyed. Love, therefore, casts out fear. The third point is the idea that God is love. The author has carried out in his work the Hebrew idea of God as a living God, a God who is working His purpose out in history, a God who has His hand in the course of events and to some extent controls them. To say that God is love does not mean that He is an abstract. It means, rather, that he is actively working in love: for example, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son to the end all might be saved. In other words, God is love - He saves in love, He acts in love, all that He does is done in love. C. H. Dodd in the Moffatt Commentary on the Johannine Epistles, says,

"To say 'God is love' implies that all His activity is loving activity. If He creates, He creates in love; if He judges, He judges in love. All that He does is the expression of His nature, which is to love. The theological consequences of this principle are far-reaching."²

² C. H. Dodd, The Johannine Epistles (New York:

To say that 'God is love' is much more than to say that God loves; for God also creates, judges, rules, etc. The latter are simply activities of God. The former is the total work of God performed in the abundance of His love. Love is more than one of God's activities. It is that characteristic of God through which all His activities are mediated.

2 continued from page 95.

Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1946), p. 110.

CONCLUSIONS TO PART II

In Part II we have been examining the writings of Paul and John in an attempt to find out their concept of divine love. We have seen that both writers lay their foundations in the Old Testament. They have taken the idea of divine love from the old religion, built upon it, and transcended it. For both writers God is the living God, a personality. One of the attributes of this personality is the character of love. This love is shown forth as a gift to man, constant and sure. As in the Old Testament we have seen that there is more than one word which is used to express this love. Paul is more consistent in his use of agape, agapao than is John, but both deviate and use phileo in the sense of divine love.

Both writers go beyond the Old Testament and make their special contributions and emphasis. In the Old Testament we learned that man's task was to obey the Law of Moses; this was his part of the covenant with Yahweh. Yahweh on His side was to make the Hebrews His chosen people and give them the gift of loving-kindness, mercy (chesed). Both New Testament writers follow this thought, John more so than Paul. John's primary emphasis is on the Christian's obeying the new Law - the Law of Love. Paul, on the other hand, puts the emphasis on love as one of the three Christian virtues. It is that virtue which gives man and his

actions a value. Paul, like John, holds that man is to obey the law of love; and the love with which he obeys that law is the value-producing factor in his life. Both writers treat the relation of love between God and man in much the same way. John, however, is a little more explicit as to the steps in this relation.

In short, both hold that love is a gift from God, its increase comes from God, and the God given love comes first. Second, God's gift of love is actually the gift of His Son to man for man's salvation. Third, man responds to that gift of love by an activity on his part, this activity taking the form of obedience to the law of love - to love one another.

Another point where both writers go beyond the Old Testament is expressed by Paul's idea of love in relation to the members of the Holy Trinity. John carries this idea a step farther by pointing out that there is a relation of love between the Father and the Son.

We come now to the high point of the apostolic teaching. In the Old Testament we saw the character or attribute of Yahweh as a God slow to anger and abundant in chesed. We might say that in the Old Testament God loves. He actively loves His people. Paul and John transcend this concept, they build upon it but they go far beyond any Old Testament revelation of divine love. Paul says, "A God of love";

John says, "God is love." What do these writers mean by these phrases? We rather think that both writers mean the same thing, for this reason: John says that God is love and then he goes on to show that God is love in that He has sent His Son to save mankind. Paul says that God is a God of love, and love is a gift from God, and this gift is Jesus Christ. Thus both authors make Christ the proof of the loving activity of God's character, and in so saying they build upon the Old Testament idea that Yshweh loves. For, as we saw in Chapter Five, to say 'God loves' would simply be to indicate one of the activities of God, but to say 'God is love' is to say that He always works in love, that all His activity is loving activity. When Paul says that God is a God of love he is saying the same thing as John, viz., that all God's activity is loving activity. The main difference between these two phrases is that Paul, who had been a thorough-going Jew, is staying a little closer to the traditional Hebrew thought form of the personal God; a God of love is to Paul a very personal God. John, however, writing some thirty or forty years after Paul, and himself probably of Greek origin, is speaking in a more philosophical manner. To say God is love is to make Him a little less personal, a little more abstract than Paul's God of love. And yet we are quite convinced from this study that both writers are saying essentially the same thing.

Both Paul and John have gone beyond the Old Testament idea of a God who loves. They have built upon this basic idea and laid thereon a foundation. Upon this foundation the systematic theologian may build a doctrine that is far greater than any revelation of the Old Covenant.

PART III

NEW TESTAMENT ILLUSTRATIONS
AND CONCLUSIONS

CHURCH DIVINITY SCHOOL
of the Pacific

1924-1925

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW COVENANT

In the first part of this thesis we saw the connection between the covenant, Yahweh as the husband of Israel, and the Fatherhood of God to the general idea of divine love. Each of these concepts was an analogy or pictorial expression of the basic thought of chesed. We turn now to the New Testament parallels of these three concepts. Our aim in this chapter is to trace their development in the New Testament.

The Covenant

It is a rather strange thing that the whole subject of a New Covenant has been largely neglected by the scholars. They refer to it in many places but there is hardly a single book that spends more than a brief paragraph developing the idea. The Greek word diathēkē appears about 33 times in the New Testament, and most of its occurrences are as a New Covenant. The most exhaustive use of the term is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the author spends a great deal of time in a comparison of the old Mosaic system with the new system of Christ. He dwells at length on the defects of the old and the superlative excellence of the new. This whole idea of a new covenant is one of the central

concepts in each of the New Testament writers. It is so much a part of their basic assumptions that they tend to symbolize the idea in the physical form of their writings: e.g., Matthew dividing his work into five parts paralleling the five books of Moses and thereby symbolizing the New Law. Or John, at the beginning of his work, giving a detailed chronology of seven days that parallel the seven days of the creation, thereby symbolizing the new era - a new creation. Neither of these examples is important by itself and might well be overlooked. But when we combine all the examples that contrast the old and the new we have an emphasis that we cannot overlook. How often have we read the phrase, put on the lips of our Lord, "Ye have heard it said ... (thus and so); But I say unto you ...(this is it)". Throughout the Gospels we have this continual weighing back and forth, this constant contrasting of the old and the new. The very name of these writings, The New Testament, implies a new covenant relation.

The idea of the New Covenant has its roots in the prophetic writings. Both Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesy the coming of a new covenant: Is 55:3, "Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear and your soul shall live: and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." And Jer 31:33, "For I Yahweh, love justice, I hate robbery with iniquity; and I will give them their

recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them." Also Jer 31:31,

"Behold, the days come, saith Yahweh, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; . . . But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days. . . . I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it, I will be their God, and they shall be my people." Also in Jer 32:40, 33:20, and Ezekiel 16:60, 34:25, and other prophetic writings.

This promise of a new covenant leads directly into the idea of the Messianic hope: the hope that God would send His Anointed One to bring in the Day of Yahweh. This concept took a number of forms: the expectation that the Messiah would be the king who should restore Israel to her former greatness, and, later, that the Messiah was to bring in the end of days, or bring the Kingdom of God into actuality. The Messianic hope was both political and religious.¹

A third concept in the Old Testament played an important part in the idea of the New Covenant. In the prophetic writings (Amos, Micah, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Isaiah) we find the concept of a remnant of Israel. This idea is of great importance for it is the beginning of the idea of a personal commitment to God instead of a

¹ Vergilius Ferm, An Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), p. 485.

Hastings, op. cit., pp. 607-610.

national covenant with Him.

"Up to that time it was the nation as a whole that was bound to God, the nation as a whole for which sacrifices were offered, the nation as a whole for which kings had fought and judges legislated. But the nation as a whole had deserted Jehovah, and the Prophet records that it is the loyalty of the individual Israelites who had remained true to Him that must henceforth be reckoned. The nation will be chastised, but the remnant shall be saved."²

This idea, started by Elijah, was repeated often by the later prophets. Israel had been unfaithful to her God, and His wrath would be visited upon her. But always there was a core, a true stock, from which would come a new and better Israel.

These three ideas: the promise of a new covenant, the Messianic hope, and the doctrine of the remnant, form the basis for the New Testament teaching of the New Covenant. The Resurrection of Christ proved for His followers that he was the long-looked-for Messiah, the Anointed One of God who was to redeem Israel. In fact, the intent of the Gospels is to prove Christ to be the Messiah. He was the spiritual saviour of the nation. But Israel had not accepted Him as the Messiah. They had, rather, put Him to death as a common criminal. We find in St. Paul's writings and in the sermons recorded in the Acts of the Apostles the repetition of these two ideas (that Christ was the Messiah

² William Sanday & Arthur Headlam, The Epistle to the Romans (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1902), p. 316.

and Israel had rejected Him). We may conclude therefore that the small band of disciples was the remnant of Israel. Not only was this band of men the remnant but Yahweh had entered into a new covenant with them and the law of this covenant was the law of love. As Paul says, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Or as John records, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another."

"The idea appealed with great force to the early Christians. It appealed to St. Stephen, in whose speech one of the main currents of thought seems to be the marvelous analogy which runs through all the history of Israel. The mass of the people has ever been unfaithful; it is the individual or the small body that has remained true to God in all the changes of Israel's history, and these the people have always persecuted as they crucified the Messiah. And so St. Paul, musing over the sad problem of Israel's unbelief, finds its explanation and justification in this consistent trait of the nation's history. As in Elijah's time, as in Isaiah's time, so now the mass of the people have rejected the Divine Call; but there always has been and still is the true Remnant, the Remnant whom God has selected, who have preserved the true life and ideal of the people and thus contain the elements of new and prolonged life."³

Throughout our discussion on Paul and John we saw the emphasis that Christ came to fulfill the law, in fact that Christ was the law. The Torah of the Old Testament was the utterance of God, it was His law, His word, as he spoke it to Moses. The Fourth Gospel gives this concept a new emphasis in referring to Christ as the Logos - the word, so that Christ himself becomes the new utterance of God, the

³ Ibid., p. 317.

New Torah or law of God.

Paul, John, Hebrews and the Acts are not the only writings in which we find this emphasis upon the new covenant. The Epistle to the Hebrews has for its primary purpose the task of contrasting the new with the old so as to show the imperfections of the old. The author points out that both the old and the new covenants are of divine origin and that the sacrificial system is at their center. The old law was holy, righteous and good but it was given fragmentarily and at vast numbers of times to a wide variety of men. The new covenant, however, was given at one time by one person and therefore it is unified, full and complete. Moreover the new covenant is given by Christ, who is at the right hand of God; and Christ, writes the unknown author, is higher than the angels who mediated the old covenant and Moses who wrote it down. But most important is the difference in the sacrifice of the Old and that of the New. In the Old Covenant the sacrifice was offered by sinful priests who were weak and unprofitable (and the sacrificial lamb was an unwilling offering). The new covenant, however, is sealed by the perfect, complete sacrifice of Christ, the eternal high priest, offering Himself, the perfect sacrifice, to God. Christ is Himself the completion of the law and the prophets.

"The demonstration from the Old Testament that a higher dignity is there accorded to the Messiah than to the angels or Moses, the description of the wearisome round

of ritual sacrifices, - altars dripping with blood, oft-repeated atonements made by sinful priests, which still left the conscience burdened with guilt, - and the contrast of all this with Christ's willing and obedient sacrifice of His holy life, must have produced a powerful effect on the minds of the readers."⁴

This idea of the new sacrifice, which is the seal of the New Covenant, is of utmost importance for our purpose. For as we saw in Chapters Four and Five, Christ was the gift of love. He was the expression of God's love for man, the outpouring activity of the God of love. This gift of love was in himself the lamb which was to be sacrificed as the bond, the seal, of the new covenant. We see this idea reflected in the "words of institution" recorded in Mt. 26:28, Mk 14:24, Lk 22:20, and I Cor 11:25, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many." Let us recall for a moment the fact which we brought out in Chapter Three.⁵ The blood of the sacrificial lamb was the bond which united Yahweh and Israel, so that from then on Israel included Yahweh. We see, therefore, that Christ's blood, which is His life, is the bond which unites God in a new covenant relation with the faithful remnant of Israel, those who believed Christ was the Messiah - the Apostolic band. All this is the loving activity of the God of love.

⁴ G. B. Stevens, The Theology of the New Testament (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1900), p. 497.

⁵ Oesterly and Robinson, op. cit., p. 157.
This Thesis, pp. 41-42.

Fatherhood of God

A second analogy is used in the Old Testament in relation with divine love, the idea of the Fatherhood of God. As we saw in Chapter Three the analogy was not used often but when it was used it was in terms of Fatherly affection, loving care, between Yahweh and His son Israel (Ex. 4:22, Jer. 3:4, and Deut. 32:6). In the Old Testament, the prevailing designation for God is King. He is the Heavenly King of Israel. "The Lord of hosts is the King of glory." When we turn to the New Testament we find that our Lord uses both these terms (King and Father) when speaking of God. The former He uses only a few times, i.e. Mt 5:35. He often, however, spoke of the Kingdom of God. Our Lord's primary, in fact characteristic, name for God was "Father." He often spoke of God as 'your Father.' Usually, however, it was 'My Father' or 'the Father.' Only once is it 'our Father' and that is in an instruction in the art of prayer. In making this distinction between 'my Father' and 'your Father' Jesus seems to be assuming some special distinction for Himself that was not applied to His followers.⁶ This distinction would be the first place at which the New Testament use of the analogy transcends the Old Testament use.

⁶ Stevens, op. cit., p. 69.

Jesus is referring to Himself as the Son of God in terms of actual Sonship. The second point of difference is in relation to His followers and God. One of His main uses of the analogy is God as the Father of His followers.⁷ Mt. 5:16

"Let your light shine, and so glorify your father." The third point of difference is as to the total extent of God's relation. In the Old Testament God was Father to no more than were under the covenant relation with Him. In the New Testament, however, the teachings of Jesus imply a universal Fatherhood of God, not just for the obedient but for all men.

"The fatherhood of God in the teaching of Jesus is neither mere creatorship, nor is it merely a name for the attitude of complaisance which corresponds to obedience and goodness on the part of men. It denotes rather the gracious loving attitude of God towards all men. God is the Father to all men, not merely because he made all men, but because he made them for himself and kindred to himself, and because they are capable of realizing sonship to him which corresponds to his fatherhood. His fatherhood embraces his universal benevolence."⁸

Christ in His actions, parables, and sermons teaches His followers the Law of love to all men; To love one another, even your enemies. His followers in fulfilling this law prove themselves to be sons of God. In other words, kinship with God depends on moral likeness to Him. Therefore, love all men, as does the Father.

⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

⁸ Ibid., p. 70.

Marriage Bond

Our third analogy is the idea of the marriage bond as an illustration of the covenant. It is rather interesting that in the Old Testament this was the primary illustration used by the prophets (the idea of Fatherhood being used only a few times). In the New Testament, however, we find the reversal of these analogies. The marriage metaphor is less used, and never in relation to God, while the fatherhood of God is the primary illustration of the new covenant. The marriage metaphor is found only in the Gospels, Ephesians and the Book of Revelation.

The illustration is the same in the synoptic Gospels (Mt 9:15, Mk 2:19, and Lk 5:34), "And Jesus said to them, 'Can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them they cannot fast.'" Jesus is here putting himself in the place of the bridegroom. He does not, however, say who the bride will be, but in the parables which follow (Mk 2:20-22) He contrasts the old with the new (the old garment and the new cloth: the old wine skins and the new wine). Just as new wine has to have new wine skins, so must a new marriage have a new marriage bond or covenant. If Jesus is the bridegroom then His marriage would imply a new covenant.

The Fourth Gospel gives us an even clearer illustration of the marriage metaphor. In the third chapter

John the Baptist denies that he is the Messiah and says, in reference to Jesus, v 29, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore, this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease." We need to remember that just before this passage Jesus had recruited several of John's followers for His own band of disciples. It is, therefore, fair to say that John is the friend, Jesus is the bridegroom and the bride is the band of followers.

The passage Eph 5:21-33 is of interest not only for the light it sheds on the marriage between Christ and His people. But it is also of interest because of the ideal it sets for Christian marriage. The author is exhorting his readers to keep their marital relations in good order. In doing so he is drawing a parallel between the relation of husband and wife and the relation of Christ and the Church. Eph 5:23, "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church." And 5:24, "As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." And again 5:29, "For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church." The relation between Christ and His Church is clearly the same as the relation between husband and wife.

Our best illustration comes from the Revelation of St. John the Divine. At the end of the First Century the author of this book writes (19:8a-9) "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to be clothed with fine linen, bright and pure - for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.'" The Lamb is Christ, the clothing of the bride is the righteous deeds of the saints; the bride, therefore, must be the community of worshipping Christians - the Church.

Let us carry this one step farther. Christ is the seal of the covenant; and under the covenant the two parties are made one by the blood of a third. Christ, as the Son of God, is the third party. He is also the bridegroom. We may say, therefore, that Christ by His own sacrifice has united Himself to the Church and is now one with the community of worshipping Christians. This is not far from the illustration used so often by St. Paul (Eph. 4:15-16, Col. 1:18, I Cor. 12:27) that the Church is the Body of which Christ is the head and we the members.

From the time of the establishment of the old covenant on, Yahweh was included in Israel. And so, under the new covenant, Christ is included in the Church.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

We have now completed our investigation of the concept of divine love. It remains for us, then, to pull together those strands of material which we have uncovered in the preceding chapters. Let us first take up the term agape. We have seen that there were only a few uses of this word in pre-Christian Greek writings and that most of these used it as the common word for love. There were, however, several uses which paved the way for its later adaptation to a special meaning: e.g., in the Letter to Aristaeus and in Philo's Quod Deus Immut. We also saw that the term was used along with phileo and eletheia in the mystery religions. The most significant use of the word, however, was found in the LXX in which there were three primary connotations: (1) an enduring quality, (2) in relation to the covenant idea, and (3) as a step in approaching or knowing God.

Second, we investigated totality of divine love in the Old Testament. We saw that the Hebrew words shabeh and ahab were the general words for love and that they are translated into agape and agapeo in the LXX. The word which expressed the affectionate side of Yahweh's character was the Hebrew chesed - loving-kindness. Before the time of Hosea this word was used primarily for a man to man relation.

There was, however, one significant use of the term before this prophet's time and that was as an attribute of Yahweh's character - He was a God of abundant chesed. Hosea based his teaching about divine love on the appeal to the inner ethical conduct of man. Yahweh was a loving husband who expected Israel to love, to have knowledge of him, and to be righteous. He loved Israel and expected her love in return. After the time of Hosea we found that chesed was seldom used in a man to man relation. Its primary use was in connection with the character of Yahweh. This was especially characteristic of the worshipping expression of the Hebrews as exemplified in the Psalms. The term was often associated with truth, righteousness, and justice. The term was a gift from Yahweh and was the means by which mankind is to be saved - he will be saved by the chesed of Yahweh. The term at times used as an hypostatization but always Yahweh was in the background. And lastly chesed is great and lasting and is given to those under the covenant relation with Yahweh. We also saw, in Chapter Three, that the chesed of Yahweh was made clear to Israel by means of the covenant with Yahweh and the illustrations of the covenant: Yahweh as the husband of Israel, and Yahweh as the father of Israel. Behind these metaphors stood the chesed of Yahweh. Under the covenant idea we saw Yahweh and Israel bound together in a complete union. This union was Yahweh's pledge of His

chesed for the chosen people, in return for which they were to obey His law and commands and live in righteousness. Both of the illustrations served to show the enduringly affectionate side of Yehweh's character. We also saw the other side of His character - His wrath. It was a wrath which was great and complete. But His chesed was the greater and if Israel would return to him she could once again partake of his loving-kindness. The condition on man's part was that he fulfill the covenant agreement.

Our third area of investigation was to undertake a similar process with the New Testament: i.e., the words for love and the analogies and metaphors that illustrate the total concept of divine love. We saw that Paul was the first to use the terms agape, agapao, and drew the conclusion that he took them over from the LXX. But we also saw that both Paul and John (the two principal users of the terms) were not consistent in their use of these words. They often interchanged phileo and agape in the same context. John did this more than did Paul. We may, therefore, take exception to the statement made by Dr. Nygren that "The introduction of the word agape as a technical term seems to be due to Paul."¹ It is true that Paul was the first to use the term but his own inconsistency in the use

¹ Anders Nygren, Agape and Eros Vol I (London: S.P.C.K., 1939), p. 83.

of it, and the great inconsistency of John, makes it difficult to believe that the New Testament writers intended to make agape a technical term for God's love, even though it was primarily used in relation to God or His Will for man.

We saw also that the New Testament writers carried over the ideas and qualities of the Old Testament doctrine of divine love and built upon them a new doctrine. This doctrine was not a reversal of the old but a building upon the old. In the old doctrine God was a God who was abundant in loving. He loves, He Judges, He rules. Love was one of His activities. But in the new doctrine, God is a God of love (or God is love). That is, a God who does all that He does through love. Love is not simply an activity of God; all of His activities are done through His loving nature. When he judges, He judges through love; when He rules, He rules through love; even when He chastises or punishes, He does so through love.

In the Old Testament we saw that love of wisdom was one of the steps in the process of knowing God. The New Testament takes this idea and greatly expands it, so that love becomes the whole relation between God and man: (1) God loves us - this is always first, (2) He loves us so much that He sent His Son to earth, (3) His Son, the new Torah, commands us to love one another, and (4) in obeying this command, the New Law, we come to know God and abide in Him.

We may say, therefore, that in the New Testament love is the way to know God. It is not simply one of the steps in a process of knowing Him.

Both Paul and John treat this concept of the relation of love in the same manner, but they place their emphasis on different phases of it. John dealt primarily with the part which man has to play in keeping his side of the New Covenant. Over and over again we saw his emphasis on man's task as that of loving his fellowman. Love, for John, is the fulfillment of the law. Paul also dealt with this fulfillment of the law, but his primary emphasis was on the idea of love as one of the three Christian virtues. Regardless of what man is, no matter what his accomplishments may be, unless he has love he is nothing. Unless man does what he does through love - just as the activities of God are done through love - he is nothing. Man then is to teach, but his teaching is to be through love; he is to serve, but his service is to be through love; he is to help, but his helping is to be through love; all that he does is to be done through love. For it is love that makes his actions worth while. Love is the value-producing factor in man's life. But we also saw that great as love was it was not all there was. Paul emphasized the teaching on love but he did not minimize the teaching on the other Christian virtues nor the other gifts of the Holy Spirit. Paul's balance on

these points is summed up in his Hymn to Love (1 Cor 13): "So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but greatest of these is love."

A second use of agape in Paul's writings, and one that is no less important, is in his constant coupling of faith and love: faith in Christ and love of one another. The Christian is to fulfill the law by faith in the Lord and by loving his fellow man. And yet even here Paul points out that the proof of his faith in Christ is shown forth in his love for his fellow man. Love between men, therefore, is the factor which gives reality and value to their faith in Christ.

Our next area of investigation took us into the New Testament parallels to the Old Testament covenant and its illustrations - the marriage relation, and the fatherhood of God. We saw that the covenant and the fatherhood of God were of primary importance to the New Testament writers.

The new covenant was so much a part of their thinking that they tended to symbolize it in the outline of their writings. We saw how this new covenant was foretold in the Old Testament and how linked with it in the minds of the New Testament authors was the idea of the Messianic hope. In the Old Testament the Messianic idea had many meanings. In the New Testament, however, it meant only one thing - that Jesus was the Messiah and His function was that of the

saviour who sought to establish a new covenant between Israel and God. But Israel rejected Him and so that small group of loyal followers became the faithful remnant of Israel - the true Israel.

This whole idea of a new covenant was based upon love. The Messiah was the gift of God's love. The Messiah established a covenant of love. The old covenant had many laws, the new covenant had one great law - to love God and to love one another. The Messiah sealed this covenant with his own blood and thereby united God and the remnant into a great fellowship.

The old covenant was limited to those of Hebrew extraction, the new covenant is open to all, of any race, of any nation. But the condition imposed upon those who would come under this covenant was faith in Christ; and the proof of this faith was loving one another.

In the New Testament God is the Father, the ideal father, the loving father. Jesus used the term "Father" as his primary name for God and in so doing He made a distinction between God as His Father and God as the Father of mankind. He never equated Himself with mankind in relation to the fatherhood of God. He was the only Son in a generic sense. Man was the son in a created sense. The latter implied that all men are under the fatherhood of God - a universal fatherhood.

In the New Testament the analogy of the marriage relationship was applied only to Christ as the bridegroom and not, as in the Old Testament, to God as the husband of Israel. We saw when we carried this idea of Christ as the bridegroom to its logical conclusion that Christ became the bridegroom of the Church. Christ is the bridegroom and He is united to the Church by the seal of His own blood. The Church is a complete unit, whole, a body of which Christ is the head and of which we are the members. All this is the loving activity of the God of love.

The new concept of divine love is greatly different from the old. It has far surpassed the revelation of the prophets, it has transcended the old law and covenant, and yet it is founded upon and based in the teachings of the Old Testament. If this thesis has served any purpose, we hope it is this: to show that, for all the differences between the old and the new, the new has its roots firmly planted in the old. The new revelation is vastly greater than the old but the God who is abundant in loving-kindness is only one step removed from the God who performs all his activities through love for those He has created.

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